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U. S. NAVAL STRATEGY AND FOREIGN POLICY IN CHINA, 1945-1950. (U)

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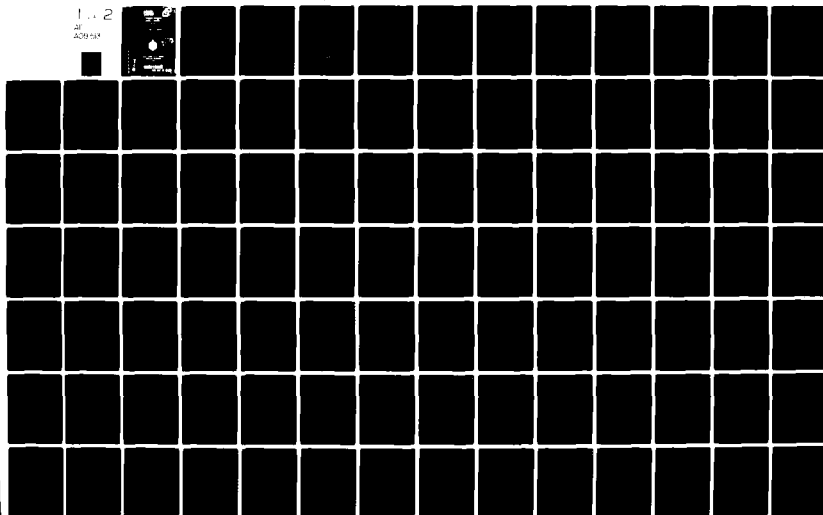
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U. S. NAVAL STRATEGY AND FOREIGN POLICY IN  
CHINA, 1945-1950

A Trident Scholar Project Report

by

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Class of 1980

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5 June 1980

Date

# 1

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the influence of U. S. Naval leaders on American foreign policy and strategy in China during the Civil War from the surrender of Japan to the outbreak of the Korean War. Based on recently declassified records, this study fills an important gap in our recent naval history.

Postwar American foreign policy towards China went through several stages: in 1945, Americans helped the Nationalists re-occupy the country after Japan's surrender; in 1946, the U. S. tried to mediate the Civil War between the Nationalists and the Communists; from 1947 to 1949, Washington adopted a policy of non-involvement in the conflict; and, in 1950, after the Communists won and the Nationalists fled to Taiwan, the Americans were divided over the issue of aid to the Taipei regime.

Postwar chiefs of naval operations viewed these policies uneasily. Fearful of a war with Russia, they realized that China was a secondary theater, but they also believed that a Communist victory in the Civil War would improve the geopolitical position of the Soviet Union. By contrast, U. S. Naval commanders in China were not ambivalent at all: they favored large-scale American aid to the Nationalists, whom they insisted could win the war with such military assistance.

The relationship between the views of these naval leaders and American foreign policies toward China is reconstructed for the first time in this study.

## PREFACE

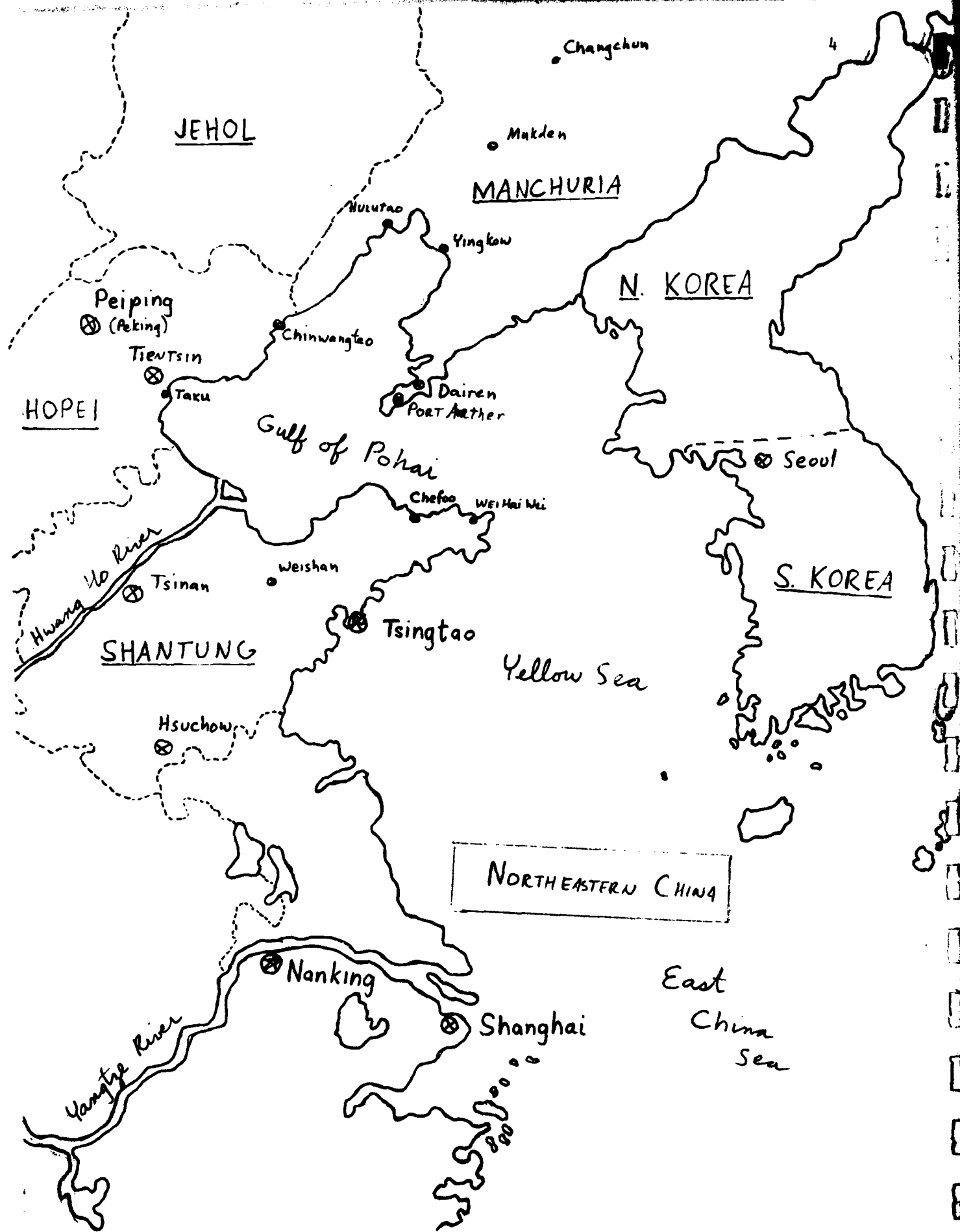
The chance to make an original contribution to U. S. naval history while still an undergraduate by participating in the Trident Scholar Program was an opportunity that I could not possibly let pass me by. Thus I began searching for an appropriate project well before the application deadline in the spring of 1979. After preliminary research, I decided that a study of American foreign policy and naval strategy during the Chinese Civil War would be an applicable and relevant history topic at the Naval Academy and would be compatible with my special interests in American diplomacy, naval history, the Far East, and revolutionary warfare.

This project, from which I believe I gained invaluable research skills and insight into the complexities of the formulation and the implementation of both foreign policy and naval strategy, would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of many people. I am very thankful for the assistance rendered by the people at the Operational Archives Section of the Naval History Division, at the Special Collections Branch of Nimitz Library, and by Dr. John Mason, Director of Oral History at the Naval Institute. In addition, the constructive criticism given by virtually the entire Naval Academy History Department was most valuable. Special thanks are due to the History Department secretaries, without whom this project would have been impossible. Above all, I am especially grateful for the considerable time, effort, and advice given by my advisor, Assistant Professor Robert William Love, Jr.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the thirty years since the Nationalist Government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek fled to the island of Taiwan in 1949, no study of the relationship between the U. S. Navy and America's China policy during the Chinese Civil War has ever been undertaken. Between 1945 and 1949 the official policy of the Truman Administration varied from conditional support of the Nationalists, to mediation, to non-involvement, to limited aid to Chiang, to "waiting for the dust to settle," and finally to complete support of the Nationalists. This last course of action had been consistently and forcefully advocated by U. S. naval leaders throughout the entire civil war. Using recently declassified official reports and personal papers, along with material that has been previously overlooked, this research project analyzes both the contributions of naval leaders to America's China policy and the effects of U. S. Naval presence in Chinese waters upon the attitudes and perceptions of Chinese leaders and upon the course of the civil war.

## THE U. S. NAVY IN CHINA: 1844-1941

On 23 May 1854, ten years after the first Sino-American commercial agreement, the Treaty of Wanghia, was signed, the Susquehanna steamed up the Yangtze River in a first and unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Chinese Imperial Government to open the river to American commerce.<sup>1</sup> Undertaken without Chinese authorization, the Susquehanna's voyage marked the beginning of nearly a century of continuous U. S. naval involvement in the affairs of the Chinese mainland. Throughout the end of the nineteenth century, U. S. Navy warships protected American lives and small, but potentially important, commercial interests during the incessant warfare and revolts that marked the dying decades of the once-great Manchu dynasty. Although U. S. naval strength in China waxed and waned depending on government policy and the demands of other strategic priorities, American influence in China was minor compared to that of the great European powers then humiliating the technologically-backward armed forces of Imperial China at every available opportunity and earnestly carving out their own spheres of influence from her territory.

As the United States became the preeminent world industrial power shortly before the turn of the century, the importance of China in America's economic ambitions increased. Because the weak and corrupt Imperial Chinese government could then offer little resistance, American naval strategists viewed the European competitors as the greatest threat to Washington's newly-announced Open Door policy that called for equality of commercial opportunity among foreign powers and respect

for the territorial and political integrity of China. This concern with preserving the Open Door and protecting China from the predatory designs of other great powers was not so much for the sake of China as for the benefit of perceived potential American commercial and strategic interests--which remained a basic premise behind the formulation of U. S. naval strategy in China for the next fifty years.<sup>2</sup>

With the withdrawal from China of most European forces at the outbreak of World War I, American naval forces there momentarily became the major counter to the increasingly expansive policy of Japan, which had achieved grudgingly-recognized great power status by virtue of its decisive victory in 1905 over czarist Russia and thereafter sought to emulate the imperialistic policies of the Western powers. The imposition of the Twenty-one Demands by Japan on China, which would have reduced China to a semi-colony and violated many precepts of the Open Door, merely confirmed what many U. S. naval strategists already felt: that Japan was the greatest threat to American interests in China. Faced with Japan's aggressiveness, naval strategists vainly argued for a stronger naval presence on the waterways of China. The situation was briefly stabilized following the reemergence of Western European power in China following the end of World War I and the signing of the Nine Power Treaty in 1922 which pledged the Great Powers, including Japan, to noninterference in the internal affairs of China.

American gunboats on the waterways of China during the 1920's patrolled a land that had degenerated into anarchy and chaos following the toppling of the Manchu dynasty in 1912 and the fragmentation of

China among near-feudal warlords. Attempting to restore some semblance of central authority was an organization that had by the mid-twenties coalesced into the Kuomintang (KMT), or Nationalist Party. Led by the idealistic, sometimes erratic, and eventually revered Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the Nationalists had been betrayed and protected by warlords, denied diplomatic recognition by the Western Powers, but finally achieved some security with the aid of Soviet Russia. Following the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925, a charismatic and enigmatic general, Chiang Kai-shek, assumed the mantle of Kuomintang leadership.

Seeking to end foreign influence and unify China, elements of the Nationalists quickly clashed with American and Western European naval forces in 1925 and 1926. After disregarding the advice of his Soviet advisors, Chiang Kai-shek launched a military campaign in conjunction with a much smaller armed group, the communists, that succeeded in uniting most of China south of Manchuria, thus gaining diplomatic recognition for the Nationalist government from Washington and putting a stop to incidents with the U. S. Navy. As Chiang's campaign appeared to be nearing a successful conclusion, he suddenly ordered the destruction of his erstwhile allies, the communists, whom he believed he could not trust. Nearly annihilated by his forces at Canton, the communists began a long period in which they struggled to survive. These incidents produced the intense hatred and complete distrust that characterized future relations between the parties and destroyed all attempts at reconciliation or compromise.

By the late 1920's, U. S. naval leaders were again concerned by the continuing encroachment by Japan upon the territory of China, and

they persuaded Congress to build six new gunboats to operate in Chinese waters, the largest American naval presence there to that time.<sup>3</sup> When completed, these craft plyed the rivers of China's interior throughout the 1930's. In 1931 the Japanese violated international agreements and the Open Door by invading Manchuria and creating in 1933 a puppet state, Manchukwo. Meanwhile, Chiang, occupied in trying to crush the tenacious communists, came nearest to his goal in 1934 in the Bandit Suppression Campaign that resulted in a 6,000-mile movement by the communists from south to north China; the emergence of Mao Tse-tung, a peasant's son from Hunan province, as the undisputed leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP); and unopposed Japanese penetration in north China.

In early 1937, a subordinate warlord, disgruntled by the civil war, seized Chiang and forced him to promise to fight the Japanese instead of continuing to pursue communists. The possibility of Chiang uniting with the CCP induced the Japanese to launch undeclared war against China. American naval vessels quickly became caught in the crossfire during the massive, bloody conflict that engulfed most of the country. After nearly being hit by a bomb fragment on the bridge of his flagship in October 1937, Admiral Harry E. Yarnell, Commander in Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, announced to the press that henceforth when fired upon American forces would fire back. As had several previous policy statements, this blast was quickly criticized by the State Department, which was anxiously trying to maintain neutrality.<sup>4</sup> Two months later, the gunboat Panay, with two large American flags painted on her awnings and flying an oversized ensign, was ripped

apart by Japanese bombs and sank into the Yangtze. Understandably, naval leaders found America's acceptance of the official Japanese explanation of "accident" and Japan's apology--later proved to be sincere--difficult to accept. Such incidents tended to reinforce a general naval attitude of distrust toward the State Department that carried over into and beyond World War II. Despite all diplomatic efforts, however, war erupted between the United States and Japan on 7 December 1941.

## U. S. NAVAL OPERATIONS IN CHINA DURING WORLD WAR II

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, American naval leaders viewed with renewed interest a plan for a naval assistance mission to China presented in the summer of 1941 by Colonel Hsiao Hsin-ju, assistant Chinese military attaché in Washington and chief agent of the Nationalist secret police. Backed by Chiang Kai-shek, the plan called for U. S. naval personnel to work closely with and assist the Nationalist Bureau of Information and Statistics (BIS), also known as the secret police, in gathering intelligence and otherwise harassing the Japanese. It was originally to have been a joint army-navy project, but the War Department showed no interest in the scheme. Through the lobbying efforts of Yarnell, then advisor to the Chinese Military Mission in Washington, and Rear Admiral Willis A. "Ching" Lee, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Ernest J. King agreed to study the plan in the spring of 1942. King, an often rude and ill-tempered officer, but described as "the most brilliant naval leader of the era,"<sup>5</sup> clearly recognized the advantage in tying down two million Japanese soldiers in China. Thus anxious to support proposals designed to help keep China in the war, King decided to send a naval mission to China, code-named Friendship Project.

Commander Milton E. Miles, a veteran of many years with the Yangtze Patrol who had a well-known reputation for "kicking the book" out the window,<sup>6</sup> took command of the naval mission, established a support staff in Washington and proceeded to China to survey the Chinese coast for possible future landings and to collect intelligence. Upon



his arrival at the wartime Chinese capital of Chungking, deep in the interior of China, Miles quickly became embroiled in the complicated intrigues that characterized the Nationalist government. Although nominally attached as naval observer to the U. S. embassy, the details of the naval mission remained a secret from the American ambassador to China and the State Department due to the close naval collaboration with the Bureau of Information and Statistics. Headed by Tai Li, a graduate of Whampoa Military Academy, former Shanghai gangster, and intimate of Chiang Kai-shek, the secret police of BIS had a widespread and well-deserved reputation for virulent anti-communism and for terrorizing critics of the KMT. With its ubiquitous surveillance program, concentration camps, and policy of political assassinations, BIS represented the most reactionary elements of the Nationalist Party with which the U. S. Navy quickly came to be identified by many in Chinese society.<sup>7</sup>

While the mechanics of the naval mission were initially ill-defined, U. S. naval personnel were soon involved training, advising, and accompanying Nationalist guerrillas in battle. Although Miles commanded the Americans, Tai Li directed the operations of the combined Chinese and American units. In addition, Miles and his activities had a supply system independent of other American forces in China and were accountable only to King, much to the chagrin of the commander of the China Theater, General Joseph Stilwell. With King's strong support, this relationship was formalized by an executive agreement on 15 April 1943; the overall organization was called the

Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO) and the American contingent officially designated Naval Group China (NGC).<sup>8</sup>

Earlier in 1943, with the enemy advance in the Pacific clearly halted, American naval leaders began to formulate a strategy to defeat Japan. With scant hope of early Soviet belligerency, King believed that the manpower resources and geographic position of China would have to be effectively used if the United States was to assault the Japanese home island. To do this, a supply route to China more effective than the long, dangerous aerial route over the high Himalaya Mountains would have to be opened. As the possibility of establishing lodgment on the coast of China was still some ways away, King sought a combined British-American land campaign to force an overland supply route through *Japanese-occupied Burma* to relieve the isolation of beleaguered China. He reasoned that, with adequate supplies, sagging Chinese morale would be boosted and that Stilwell would be able to train and equip the Chinese Armies up to a strength sufficient to begin to fight the Japanese effectively. However, the implementation of King's strategy quickly ran into difficulty.

Throughout 1943 ominous reports about the inability of China to continue fighting in the absence of a supply route reached King and Admiral William D. Leahy, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and a former CNO. With Leahy, King viewed with alarm the possibility of China dropping out of the war and over a million Japanese soldiers freed to oppose the American advance across the Pacific. Arguing his views on China forcefully at both the Casablanca and Trident Conferences in 1943, King was incensed at reluctance of the British to

commit their resources outside the periphery of Europe. Nevertheless, he achieved a tenuous agreement to launch the Burma campaign, but as 1943 drew to a close, the British reneged on their promise. After a series of exceptionally bitter meetings between the American and British chiefs of staff at Cairo and Tehran in late 1943 that soured Anglo-American relations in the Pacific for the duration of the war, President Franklin D. Roosevelt sided with the British and with General Clair Chennault, commander of U. S. Army tactical air forces in China, who maintained that with airpower alone Japan could be defeated, thus obviating the need to build up the Chinese Army as King and Stilwell envisaged.<sup>9</sup>

In China, the situation in 1944 was deteriorating, the ongoing dispute between the KMT and the CCP further complicating matters. The fury of the initial Japanese offensives had long since been spent in the vastness of China, and the war had settled down to a stalemate with the undefeated but overextended Japanese unable to bring decisive blows to bear. The glory of the KMT's heroic but futile defense of Shanghai in 1937 and the pride of having held out alone against the Japanese for so many years rapidly diminished as the war dragged on with no end in sight. Cynicism, corruption, and defeatism became rampant in the inflation-ravaged capital of Chungking. In north China, the communist army undertook guerrilla warfare against the Japanese, and Mao's forces expanded their strength, territory, and popularity in the process, this to the consternation of Chiang, who, despite his temporary cooperative arrangement with the CCP, ensured that all American aid remained in his hands.

While communist guerrillas harassed the Japanese in the occupied areas of China, the ill-equipped, ill-fed, under-trained, and poorly-led Nationalist soldiers waited just outside the reach of the Japanese; these Chinese forces existed only because they had given up more territory than the Japanese could control. The issue of how to reorganize the ragged, exhausted Chinese army soon resulted in a confrontation in late 1944 between Chiang and Stilwell, who argued that the army needed far-reaching reforms. Under his plan, inept leadership, inefficient organization, brutal recruiting methods, and other problems would be eliminated. However, the power of the KMT and Chiang had become bound up in maintaining the status quo, both in the army and society in general. Reforms would upset the delicate balance that maintained Nationalist power. Chiang also reached the conclusion that sooner or later the United States would defeat Japan and therefore began hoarding supplies to use against the communists after the war rather than against the Japanese as Stilwell so avidly sought. By threatening to drop out of the war, Chiang could ensure the continuous flow of American aid that Stilwell was attempting to use as a lever to press reforms.<sup>10</sup> Thus Chiang refused to heed Stilwell's advice and the relationship between the two became acidic.

Despite the critical situation, China remained in the war into 1944 and naval plans for a landing on China's coast proceeded apace. As the American navy rapidly advanced across the Central Pacific, a major meeting on strategy took place on 5 and 6 May 1944 among King, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, and Vice Admiral Charles M. Cooke, King's chief of staff. All

continued to agree that a landing needed to be made somewhere on the China coast in order to join and supply the forces of Stilwell, which would then be able to defeat the large Japanese forces in China and clear the way for the invasion of Japan. The conferees ordered Miles to solicit Stilwell's views on the subject for further planning, but cooperation between Miles and Stilwell had by this time become difficult.

From the start of its operations, Stilwell took an intense dislike to the operations of SACO which he viewed as a clever Nationalist attempt to acquire American arms and training for an organization whose prime mission was to stamp out dissent and hunt communists rather than to fight the Japanese. The reactionary elements of BIS were among those most threatened by and resistant to the reforms that Stilwell was trying to force on the Chinese, and his willingness to use the communists to fight the Japanese further marked him as an enemy in the eyes of BIS and its leader, Tai Li. Stilwell maintained that the activities of Naval Group China and SACO hampered his efforts to create an effective Chinese army, and, in an effort to exert some measure of control, Stilwell successfully used his authority over the air supply route to limit the supplies destined for some of Naval Group China's activities.<sup>11</sup>

Miles, anxious to preserve his close relationship with Tai Li quickly came to accept the views of the reactionary elements of the KMT. Realizing that Chiang was coming to favor Chennault's airpower strategy because it would still ensure the flow of American aid while

relieving the pressure to reform the organization of his army, Miles seized the opportunity to further his prestige in KMT circles by vigorously supporting Chennault's strategy as an alternative to Stilwell's plan. Working closely with Miles and in full accord with his views, the U. S. Naval Attaché, Marine Colonel James McHugh, a longtime China veteran and intimate of the top KMT circles, advised Washington that Chennault's strategy was the only one Chiang would accept and thus the only one that the United States should pursue. McHugh correctly stated that whereas Stilwell could probably reorganize and train an effective Chinese army, Chiang would never submit to reforms that would destroy the mechanisms by which he maintained loyalty and control. In addition, McHugh advised that the United States should accept the fact that Chiang intended to save his arms for postwar position.<sup>12</sup>

By the late summer of 1944, with cooperation between Stilwell and Chiang at a low ebb, Chiang began to seek Stilwell's replacement. At Chiang's suggestion, McHugh reported to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox that not only should Chennault's strategy be predominant, but that Stilwell should be replaced by Chennault as Chinese theater commander. McHugh also indiscreetly let this recommendation become known widely. When informed, General George C. Marshall, chief of staff of the U. S. Army, angrily denounced McHugh's actions as causing "irreparable harm" to the American war effort in China and demanded McHugh be recalled.<sup>13</sup> As McHugh was due to be relieved soon anyway, Marshall settled for a guarantee from King that McHugh would never again be allowed to serve in China.

Despite his conciliatory gesture to the army, King continued as he had previously to block attempts to place Naval Group China under the theater commander, and hence, army, operational control. King had become somewhat disillusioned with Stilwell and with China's ability to field an effective army following a late summer Japanese offensive that completely shattered the Chinese lines and easily overran Chennault's advance, unprotected airbases. Complete disaster was staved off only because the Japanese could not sustain their offensive across the vast reaches of China's interior.

Relations between Stilwell and Naval Group China sank to new lows following the late summer arrival of Major General Patrick J. Hurley, USA (Ret.) as FDR's personal representative. A boisterous, capable man who was woefully ignorant of the complex situation in China, Hurley sought to mediate the Stilwell-Chiang dispute and to determine the future of American aid to the Nationalist government. He quickly sided against Stilwell and came to distrust the American embassy staff personnel and the general's political advisors, whom he believed were sympathetic to the communists. In turn, they resented Hurley's authority and power. The animosity increased to such a pitch that, at Miles' suggestion, Hurley began to send his secret communications to Roosevelt via the Naval Group China radio, thus depriving the embassy personnel of important information. However, this arrangement allowed Tai Li's agents working with Naval Group China easy access to new American plans and initiatives.<sup>14</sup> Thus the Nationalist government was put in an improved bargaining position. With the aid of Hurley, Miles and good intelligence, Chiang forced Roosevelt to recall Stilwell on 28 October 1944.

Relations between U. S. embassy officials and Naval Group China had been poor for some time since the knowledge of the navy's close working relationship with the dreaded secret police became widely known and as Miles came to openly proclaim his own violently anti-communist views. Many foreign service officers, particularly John Davis and John Service, both longtime veterans of China, came to be thoroughly disillusioned with the increasing corruption and repressive undemocratic policies of the KMT. In seeking an alternative, they correctly noted that the CCP had a number of popular policies, the most important of which was its land reform program. They argued that the CCP was rapidly gaining the support of the down-trodden Chinese peasantry, who made up the vast majority of the population. As land reform would have destroyed the KMT's base of power, which rested upon the privileged landholding gentry class, KMT officials such as Tai Li saw the CCP as an even greater threat than the Japanese, and throughout the war, clashes between KMT and CCP troops were frequent.

Naval Group China was soon involved in covert anti-communist activity, which included a police training academy, staffed by former FBI agents and designated Naval Unit No. 9. Critics charged that the courses taught concentrated on political crimes and means of effective repression. Indeed, Miles himself admitted that it had "a political involvement which cannot fully be put on paper."<sup>15</sup> It was widely believed, but never substantiated, that U. S. naval officers participated with their guerrilla units in offensive actions against communists. It was true, however, that the navy provided



weapons to SACO Chinese units with full knowledge of their intended use against communists.<sup>16</sup> The communists, for their part, lost no opportunity to protest the activities of Miles and Tai Li and the continuing naval assistance to reactionary KMT elements.

Throughout the war, the communists signaled that they desired to cooperate with the United States in defeating the common enemy, Japan. In the fall of 1943, Roosevelt ordered the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) to gather intelligence in communist controlled areas. Miles, who had earlier been named head of the OSS in China, refused, and was relieved of his OSS duties. Instead, the "Dixie Mission" to the communist capital of Yen-an went ahead in the summer of 1944 under army and OSS auspices. The "Dixie Mission" discovered that the Chinese communists, who by bitter experience in the 1920s and 1930s had little trust in Moscow, sincerely desired to cooperate with the United States. However, the forces that favored complete recognition of the Nationalist government and its policies, including Hurley, Miles, and Stilwell's replacement, General Albert C. Wedemeyer, prevented any action on the communists' proposals. In late 1944 a plan to secretly transport communist leaders Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai to Washington to meet directly with Roosevelt was discovered by one of Tai Li's agents and forwarded by Naval Group China to Hurley and Wedemeyer, who blocked the plans.<sup>17</sup> With these exploratory attempts at cooperation stymied on all levels, the CCP began to revert to its more typical militant stance and increased its criticism of the United States.

After the disastrous Japanese offensives in late 1944, King gave up on the hope that the Chinese Army would be of much utility in the final defeat of Japan. Although the navy's original plans to join with Stilwell's armies were abandoned, naval strategists were still greatly concerned over the large numbers of Japanese troops in China that could have an important bearing on the course of the projected invasion of the Japanese home islands. Cooke, King's chief of staff, felt that a landing on the China coast would draw the Japanese armies from their inland position and relieve the pressure on the hard-pressed Chinese. Nimitz strongly supported a China landing to take place after the occupation of Okinawa, and King agreed.<sup>18</sup>

Navy planners had always been concerned with the possibility of Soviet entrance into the Pacific war. At the Yalta Conference in January 1945, President Roosevelt persuaded Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin to enter the war against Japan three months after the surrender of Germany. Stalin agreed to this after being promised the return of possessions in Manchuria lost during the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 at the expense of the Nationalist government, which had been promised the return of all Manchuria earlier in the war. The U. S. Army, which would bear the brunt of casualties in any invasion of Japan, anxiously sought help in tying down Japanese forces in China and strongly advocated Soviet participation.

Although sympathetic to the army's plight, the navy was lukewarm at best about Soviet entry, with Cooke believing that the necessity for Soviet aid was not as great as generally perceived. Strong anti-Soviet attitudes in the navy extended well back before

the start of World War II. From 1937 to 1939, Leahy, then CNO, bitterly resisted Soviet attempts to buy American-built warships, a plan to which Roosevelt had agreed to improve Soviet-American relations. Naval bureaucrats delayed action long enough for the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact to once again sour relations.<sup>19</sup> Despite America's wartime alliance with the Soviet Union, some naval leaders, particularly Cooke, who predicted that the "wartime honeymoon"<sup>20</sup> would quickly end, and Leahy believed that the United States would be faced with a hostile and aggressive Soviet Russia once the common threat of fascism had been eliminated.

A dramatic shift in naval influence occurred with the sudden death of President Roosevelt on 12 April 1945. Roosevelt, a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, with many high ranking naval officers as personal friends, had a receptiveness to navy-initiated proposals that the new President, Harry S. Truman, did not. King, who once could "raise holy hell"<sup>21</sup> with Roosevelt and get away with it, now found himself thought of as a "crusty martinet"<sup>22</sup> by Truman and that his opinions no longer carried weight. Truman, however, greatly respected and trusted Leahy and retained him as his military chief of staff until 1949. Leahy thus not only provided much of the continuity between Roosevelt's and Truman's policies, but was in a position to greatly influence the future course of America's China polity.

Leahy's views on China were greatly influenced by Hurley following a meeting of the two in March 1945. Leahy shared Hurley's dislike of the regular foreign service officers with whom Hurley had so much

trouble and agreed with Hurley's position that Chiang should be the sole recipient of American aid and recognition.<sup>23</sup> Hurley, with his superficial knowledge of Chinese history, was inclined to view the Chinese communists as mere tools of Soviet foreign policy, rather than as an indigenous, nationalistic political organization responding to changing social and economic conditions. This interpretation of the CCP fit in with Leahy's fears about future Soviet expansionism. Another important administration official greatly influenced by Hurley was Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal, a combative and intense executive who also distrusted the Soviets. Thus top ranking naval leaders such as Cooke, Leahy, and Forrestal viewed the Chinese communists in the context of a much broader Soviet-American confrontation. The actions of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and Iran in 1945 and 1946 did nothing to dispel these notions. As a result, American naval strategy for China continued to maintain its traditional form of preventing an outside power, in this case the Soviet Union, from achieving domination of China.

As U. S. forces closed in on Japan in the summer of 1945, American leaders became apprehensive as Soviet Armies prepared to invade Japanese-occupied Manchuria. At the Potsdam conference in July 1945, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes expressed the concern that "once the Russians get in [Manchuria] it would not be easy to get them out."<sup>24</sup> Forrestal agreed. King strongly urged that U. S. troops land in the Manchurian ports of Darien or Port Arthur before the Russians got there. With the United States now in possession of the atomic bomb, Soviet participation did not seem so necessary. However,

true to his word, Stalin declared war on Japan on 9 August 1945.

As Soviet divisions poured across the Manchurian border and easily decimated the skeletonized Japanese Army, the American Ambassador to Russia, W. Averell Harriman, urgently recommended that the proposed landings in Dairen take place. Harriman worried that the Soviets, then negotiating with the Nationalist Chinese over the future of Manchuria, had upped their demands in order to prevent a treaty from being signed before Soviet Armies occupied all of Manchuria.<sup>25</sup> On 11 August President Truman directed that plans for landings in Dairen and Korea proceed. However, the signing of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Pact on 14 August, in which the Soviets recognized the Nationalists as the legitimate and sole government of China to the dismay of the Chinese communists, and the extremely rapid advance of Soviet armies into Dairen, prompted the plans to be cancelled on 18 August.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, events in China were building to a bitter army-navy confrontation that had been brewing since Wedemeyer relieved Stilwell in October 1944. Like Stilwell, Wedemeyer took an immediate and intense dislike to Naval Group China's integrated operations with Tai Li's secret police. He soon sought to bring Naval Group China under his control. Hurley, now Ambassador to China, also clashed with Wedemeyer. As the squabbling among Hurley, Wedemeyer, and Miles endangered American policy in China, all three were called before the Joint Chiefs of Staff in March 1945 to explain their positions. Hurley charged that Wedemeyer's dislike of Miles was caused by jealousy over Miles' close relations with Chiang. Miles blamed his difficulties on

interference from British imperialists and communistic State Department officers. Wedemeyer stated that the actions of Miles were detrimental to the announced U. S. policy of recognizing and aiding the Nationalist government in its fight against Japan but not in its dispute with the communists. Despite Miles' claim that the SACO agreement of 1943 could not be altered without government-to-government negotiation, the JCS, after prolonged army-navy feuding, placed Naval Group China under the operational control of the *China Theater Commander*, General Wedemeyer.<sup>27</sup> Despite the JCS action, the personal animosity between Miles and Wedemeyer continued to grow throughout the summer of 1945.

The dramatic and sudden capitulation of Japan in August 1945 caught all parties in China unprepared. Both communist and KMT forces belatedly rushed to occupy strategic positions which surrendered, but still undefeated and armed, Japanese would soon give up, fighting with each other in the process. Chiang issued orders for the American-trained SACO guerrillas to advance into areas where they would undoubtedly clash with communist forces. Wedemeyer, conscious of his most recent JCS directive admonishing him not to participate in any fratricidal strife between the CCP and the KMT, ordered Miles not to allow U. S. naval advisors to accompany their guerrilla units.<sup>28</sup> In a direct disobedience of Wedemeyer's orders, Miles ordered his men to proceed with their Chinese units, to turn over all possible arms and ammunition to *Tai Li's* forces, and to burn his instructions after swearing their units to secrecy.<sup>29</sup>

Although Wedemeyer did not know of Miles' actions, he had already determined that Miles must go and had correspondingly recommended to the JCS that SACO operations be terminated immediately upon the surrender of Japan. Wedemeyer quickly ran into opposition from King and Chiang. King agreed with Miles, now a rear admiral, that closing the SACO operations as of surrender day would leave an extremely bad impression with the Chinese government which had already requested that Naval Group China activities be continued after the cessation of hostilities. Shortly thereafter on 27 August, four days before asking for a similar army mission, Chiang requested a postwar United States naval mission to China, hopefully staffed by Miles and other officers of Naval Group China.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, Wedemeyer persisted in his efforts to have SACO abolished as soon as possible and Miles sent out of China. During a meeting with Chiang Kai-shek in mid-September, Wedemeyer flatly stated that there would be no place for Miles if he, Wedemeyer, were to head the proposed military mission. After Madame Chiang reluctantly agreed to translate Wedemeyer's disparaging remarks about Miles to her husband, Chiang offered high praise of Miles and stated he would therefore have to reevaluate his formerly high opinion of Wedemeyer.<sup>31</sup>

By mid-September, Miles kicked "the book" too far. Suffering from extreme fatigue and addicted to stimulants and anti-malarial drugs, Miles held a staff meeting in which he admonished his subordinates that "if I do something you don't think is right, just shut up about it."<sup>32</sup> Miles then laid out plans to carry out SACO activities beneficial to the Nationalists without Wedemeyer's

knowledge. Shortly thereafter, Miles called a press conference where he intended to "blow the lid off" and state he did not recognize Wedemeyer's authority as Theater Commander.<sup>33</sup> Miles was then placed under army medical supervision, turned over to the custody of newly arrived 7th Fleet commander, Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, and quickly flown out of China, never to return again.



## U. S. NAVAL OPERATIONS IN CHINA: SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 1945

Within a little over a week after the capitulation of Japan, units of the United States Seventh Fleet, under the command of Kinkaid, steamed into the Yellow Sea wary of possible resistance from large Japanese forces remaining in mainland China and watchful of Soviet actions in Manchuria. Kinkaid dispatched Destroyer Squadron 64, commanded by Commodore Chester C. Wood, to the port of Dairen to ascertain the status of approximately 1500 allied POW's and internees held by the Japanese at Mukden. Wood's two destroyers steamed into Dairen on 2 September and found that elements of the Soviet 39th Army had occupied Dairen a week earlier. Wood received little cooperation in his mission from the Soviet commandant, Major General Yemanov, who had his hands full trying to restore some semblance of discipline to his looting and pillaging troops.<sup>34</sup> Although forewarned by Wood, the Soviets became upset when nearly one hundred aircraft from the Antietam and Cabot overflew Dairen in a show of force and in two separate incidents drew fire from Soviet Catalina patrol planes. Wood reportedly mollified the Soviets with a version of the "boys will be boys" theme as he stated that it was so difficult to control playful fighter pilots, which the Soviets understood.<sup>35</sup>

Dissatisfied with the lack of progress, however, Kinkaid dispatched Thomas G. W. Settle, an officer with Russian language ability, to Dairen. Arriving in his cruiser flagship the Louisville on 10 September, Settle had more luck with Lieutenant General Kozlov, who had relieved Yemanov. However, tension again increased after three heavy cruisers and five destroyers from the Seventh Fleet maneuvered off Dairen. The number

of American ships in Dairen itself already included Settle's cruiser, two destroyers, and five destroyer escorts. Uneasy in the presence of such overwhelming naval power, the Soviets expedited the return of the Allied POW's. Settle recommended that a show of force scheduled for two days later not take place.<sup>36</sup>

Kinkaid went ashore at Shanghai in mid-September and was briefed on the Chinese situation by Hurley; thereafter he clearly shared Hurley's views on aid to the Nationalists and distrust of United States diplomats. Kinkaid then travelled to Chungking, met Chiang, and received assurance that only American ships were welcome in any Chinese port, any time, with or without permission from the Nationalist government. Kinkaid also met with Wedemeyer and finalized arrangements for the introduction of U. S. Marines into key strategic points in North China, a deployment that had been planned since the beginning of August. At that time Chiang had sought American assistance in capturing important points and holding them for the arrival of Nationalist troops, who without adequate transport could not arrive at the coast for some time. Wedemeyer agreed, seeing that American involvement was necessary to ensure the prompt disarmament and repatriation of surrendered Japanese troops. In addition, Chiang desperately wanted to prevent the communists from capturing key positions and receiving surrendered Japanese arms. Thus at Chiang's insistence, Wedemeyer recommended that the landing of American troops in China be given immediate priority and that Japanese troops be ordered to surrender only to Nationalist forces or to American units in the absence of KMT troops.

Although Wedemeyer's request for an immediate landing was denied on grounds that the occupation of Japan and Korea took precedence, General Order Number One, issued by General McArthur, Supreme Commander Allied Powers in Japan, ordered that Japanese units were to surrender only to Chiang's authorized representatives. Thus the communists were blocked from receiving the surrender of Japanese positions and arms. Although not assigned the priority Wedemeyer desired, plans for American landings in China were formalized in the navy plan BELEAGER one day before the actual surrender which called for the landing of elements of the Marine III Amphibious Corps (IIIAC) and the 1st Marine Air Wing, at the north China ports of Taku, Chinwantao, Chefoo, and Tsingtao beginning on 30 September.<sup>37</sup>

Ships of the 7th Amphibious Force, veterans of nearly sixty assault landings in the Pacific War, commanded by Vice Admiral Daniel E. Barbey, began transporting marine units in late September after first carrying the 25th Army Corps through mine-infested waters to occupy South Korea. Arriving on schedule on 30 September elements of the 1st Marine Division, IIIAC, landed at Taku and quickly occupied the nearby cities of Tientsin and Peiping (Peking), receiving a tumultuous welcome from the Chinese population. The following day additional elements of the 1st Marine Division occupied the port of Chinwantao, a hundred miles north of Taku, where they found communists engaged in fighting with former Chinese puppet troops, who had fought for the Japanese during the war. After occupying the ports, marine units fanned out and secured key railroad bridges and road junctions. By mid-October marines assumed guard duty over the vital Tsang Shan coal mines.

Original BELEAGER plans called for the landing on 10 October of one marine regimental combat team (RCT) at the port of Chefoo on the north side of the strategic Shantung peninsula directly across the Gulf of Pohai from Soviet-held Dairen. However, a reconnaissance by Settle's cruiser-destroyer squadron on 4 October revealed that unlike Taku and Chinwantao, communist forces had already driven the Japanese out and were in full control of the port. Additionally, there were no allied POW's to be repatriated. Nevertheless, Settle conferred with the chief communist representative in Chefoo, Yu Ku-ying, and stated that U. S. Marines would occupy Chefoo in the near future, requesting that the communists remove any beach defenses which might interfere with the landings and that communist 8th Route Army forces withdraw from the beachhead.<sup>38</sup> After stalling for two days awaiting instructions from his superiors, Yu very cordially reported that Settle's request had caused much suspicion among the local communists who suspected that the Americans intended to interfere in the internal affairs of China by landing KMT troops.<sup>39</sup>

At this point Kinkaid ordered Barbey and Major General Keller E. Rockey, USMC, Commander of IIIAC, to proceed to Chefoo to investigate further, accompanied by the four cruisers of Jerauld C. Wright's Cruiser Division 6. In conferences on 6 and 7 October, Yu informed Barbey and Rockey that ten days previously Chu Teh, commander of the 18th Group Army--the communist armies--had protested the proposed landings at Chefoo and had been greatly distressed by Settle's statement that the landings would take place. He stated that the communists wished to remain on friendly terms and cooperate fully but that they

did not understand the need for landing American troops when there were no Japanese forces present and no former POW's to be repatriated. However, the communists agreed to the landings under the condition that no KMT soldiers or officials accompany American troops, that there be no interference with the local communist police and administration, and that advance notice of the landing be given. If these conditions were not met, Yu declared, the Americans would have to bear full responsibility for any incident that might occur. Barbey and Rockey told Yu that the conditions would be met.<sup>40</sup>

Faced with an unexpected situation clearly not covered by any directives, Barbey and Rockey told their superiors--Rockey's IIIAC had come under Wedemeyer's command after landing in China--that landing American troops in Chefoo to hold the port for KMT troops undoubtedly would involve American troops in fratricidal conflict between KMT and CCP forces and recommended that the landings not take place.<sup>41</sup> Although talks continued for several more days, Wedemeyer agreed with Rockey's recommendations and on 10 October the marine RCT was diverted to the port of Tsingtao where they disembarked along with the 6th Marine Division, IIIAC, already slated to land there.

During the delicate negotiations at Chefoo, a detachment of marine engineers in the Tientsin-Peking area was fired upon by forty-five Chinese, reportedly members of the communist 8th Route Army, and one marine seriously wounded. Following the announced cancellation of the Chefoo landings, a communist general called on marine headquarters in Tientsin and apologized for the incident.<sup>42</sup> No further clashes occurred with the communists for several weeks.

On 19 October, an incident occurred that demonstrated the confused and chaotic situation in which U. S. naval commanders had to make their decisions. As Settle's cruiser-destroyer squadron remained at anchor off Chefoo, eight decrepit steamers and four junks, some flying American flags, sailed into sight and landed Chinese troops of unknown origin and dubious political allegiance on an offshore island. Settle received an emissary from the Chinese flotilla, who matter-of-factly requested gunfire support for an attack on the communists at Chefoo. Settle refused, hauled up anchor and swiftly departed lest he become involved in a potential incident. Settle periodically sent a destroyer back to Chefoo, demanding that the Chinese flotilla not fly the American flag under any circumstances. A destroyer reconnaissance on 29 October revealed that communist forces had attacked and routed the mysterious Chinese. Despite Settle's clear refusal to support the flotilla, whose troops were ex-puppets and not KMT, communist propaganda soon used the incident as an example of KMT-U.S. Navy cooperation and anti-communist activity.<sup>43</sup>

In fact the communists did not have to fabricate examples of Nationalist-navy cooperation, for by mid-October 56,000 troops of the Chinese Nationalist 13th and 56th Armies were afloat on the fifty ships of Transport Squadrons 17 and 24 destined for the Soviet-held port of Dairen. In accordance with the terms of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty of 14 August 1945, the Soviets agreed to permit the entrance of KMT troops into Soviet occupied Manchuria, whereupon Chiang requested American aid in transporting troops from their wartime location in southern China to Manchuria. Anxious to prevent either the

Soviets or the remaining Japanese from attaining too much influence in the absence of Chinese forces, the JCS agreed to the request in September. Because the air transports of the U. S. 14th Air Force was already engaged airlifting 65,000 troops of the Chinese Nationalist 92nd and 94th Armies from south China to the Peking-Tientsin area, held for them by the Marine IIIAC, the job of transporting Chinese troops to Manchuria fell to the U. S. Navy.

As the troop ships of Transport Squadron 17 neared Diaren on the 18th of October, Kinkaid received word from Wedemeyer that the Soviets had reversed themselves and would refuse to permit the landings of KMT troops on grounds that Dairen was a "free port."<sup>44</sup> Once again Kinkaid dispatched Settle's cruiser squadron to the trouble spot. Conferring with Lieutenant General Kozlov, Settle determined that Soviets were referring to a technicality in the Sino-Soviet agreement that stipulated that KMT troops would not enter Dairen until 11 November. Accordingly, transport Squadron 17 steamed to Chinwantao and there disembarked the 13th Chinese Nationalist Army.

Negotiations continued several days later as Transport Squadron 24 neared Dairen. Although still refusing permission to land at Dairen, the Soviets suggested that the Manchurian ports of Hulutao or Yingkow, also in Soviet hands, serve as alternate debarkation points. After Chiang and Wedemeyer agreed to Hulutao, Kinkaid dispatched Barbey, in his flagship Catoctin, to reconnoiter the port.

Arriving on 27 October, Barbey sent a small boat to make contact with the local Soviet port authorities. As the boat drew within hailing range of the shore, clearly displaying the U. S. ensign, it

was fired upon by unidentified Chinese soldiers and quickly withdrew. Later Lau Sho-kai, commander of the Communist New 4th Army, came aboard Barbey's ship and apologized for the firing. It soon became apparent that the New 4th Army held Hulutao in great force, with more reinforcements steaming across the Gulf of Bohai from ports on the north side of Shantung Peninsula, including Chefoo. Although cordial, the communists were disconcerted by the presence of U. S. naval forces and vowed to resist any landing of KMT troops even if carried by American ships. Impressed by the sincerity of communist demands and irritated by what he began to perceive as Soviet duplicity, Barbey recommended to Kinkaid that no landings take place "unless the United States was prepared to become involved in the Chinese Civil War."<sup>45</sup>

As Barbey waited at Hulutao for further instructions, General Tu Li-ming, Commander of KMT forces in northeast China, nearly all of whom were still aboard U. S. Navy ships, lodged a protest at the headquarters of Marshal Melanovsky, the Soviet Commander in Manchuria, and received an oral guarantee of a safe landing at Soviet-occupied Yingkow. Advised of the Soviet guarantee on 31 October, Barbey arrived at Yingkow on 2 November to reconnoiter and found that the local Soviet authorities knew of no such guarantee and would not negotiate because they had no instructions. The next morning Barbey found that the Soviets had completely evacuated the port leaving it in the hands of newly arrived Chinese communist troops. The by now thoroughly frustrated Barbey refused a request by Tu, who had arrived aboard Barbey's flagship the day before, to land the 52nd Chinese Nationalist Army on an undefended beach near Yingkow. Barbey recommended to Kinkaid that any landing at Yingkow would "undoubtedly cause intense resentment in all communist



areas and definitely identify us as active military participants in the civil war now brewing."<sup>46</sup> In fact, the communist leaders, Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, then engaged in failing political negotiations with Chiang, vociferously protested the movement of nationalist troops by U. S. ships.

As a result of Barbey's recommendation, Transport Squadron 24 was ordered to debark the 52nd CNA at Taku. At the urgent request of Chiang, however, the destination was altered to Chinwangtao where the 13th CNA had debarked a week earlier and been promptly mauled by communist forces as soon as it left the American defense perimeter. With the reinforcements of the 52nd Army, the Nationalists then fought their way overland reaching Hulutao on 25 November.

The U. S. ships involved in transporting Chinese troops endured considerable difficulty. According to the captain of the Randall (APA 224), "Some of the troops were not well house-broken."<sup>47</sup> The seriousness of the situation, however, was indicated by the fact that twenty-five Chinese soldiers died on board U. S. ships waiting at Hulutao and Yingkow from causes including dysentery, cholera, smallpox, and starvation. The Chinese officers appeared apathetic to the physical condition of their troops, nearly all of whom were illiterate peasants from the lowest segments of society who would in all likelihood never see their families again. In addition, the size of a Chinese unit was consistently less than 75% of the claimed size, due primarily to desertion and the padding of rolls by officers who pocketed the extra salaries of nonexistent troops. It was soldiers such as these that would be expected to defend against the growing forces of the ever-more popular communists.

Tensions rose throughout the end of October and into November as negotiations between the nationalists and communists under the sponsorship of Ambassador Hurley collapsed. The situation was extremely confused as American, Japanese, Soviet and former puppet troops occupied positions over which the communists and nationalists clashed. The number of incidents involving American forces increased greatly. Unidentified troops fired upon a U. S. minesweeper on the Yangtze River in late October. A week later American marines were fired upon in three separate incidents and shortly after an American TBM torpedo-bomber crashed south of Peking and the crew was taken captive by the Communist 8th Route Army. Four officers from the SS George R. Holms disappeared and a squad of marines searching the communist-held town of Shanhaikwan was fired upon, an action which prompted even Chou En-lai to send a delegate to American headquarters to find out what was going on.

The incidents became more ominous on 15 November when a Soviet fighter plane unsuccessfully attacked a U. S. Mariner patrol plane forty miles off the port of Dairen after the aircraft had investigated six large Soviet cargo ships.<sup>48</sup> The same day, communist Chinese shot at a train that happened to be carrying Major General DeWitt Peck, commander of the 1st Marine Division, an incident which prompted Rockey to warn that the offending communist village would be strafed by aircraft in the event of further attacks on U. S. forces.<sup>49</sup>

While the escalating fighting between the nationalists and communists threatened American marines, the War and Navy Departments in Washington feuded about the mechanics of a proposed U. S. military

advisory group that had been requested by the Nationalists at the end of August. In a plan put forward on 5 October, General Marshall sought a combined army-navy advisory group that would be under the operational command and control of an army general who would report directly to the JCS and serve as the United States' chief military advisor to the Chinese Nationalist Government. King completely rejected Marshall's proposal on ground that it permitted the navy insufficient freedom, broke the navy's direct access to the Nationalist government, and relegated the navy to a secondary role. King counter-proposed that two independent army and navy missions be sent, with a chairman to coordinate activities rather than to command and control. King's view, supported by Leahy, prevailed at a meeting of the JCS on 27 October.<sup>50</sup>

Through October and into November, military and State Department planners were gravely concerned as American support in helping its loyal wartime ally, the Nationalist Chinese, reoccupy areas previously lost to the Japanese, threatened to involve U. S. Marines in direct confrontation with insurgent communist Chinese forces seeking to occupy the same areas. In addition, ominous, though still unconfirmed reports of Soviets turning over captured Japanese arms to Chinese communist forces and other Soviet violations of agreements reached in the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty, led to the fear that the Soviets intended to occupy Manchuria indefinitely or to establish a permanent sphere of influence through the use of Chinese communist surrogates. In late 1945 the perceived Soviet threat to postwar American interests throughout the world appeared more dangerous to top military leaders than to

State Department officials, a fact which led to disagreement and distrust between military and diplomats.

Responding to the perceived threat, the JCS recommended unconditional completion of wartime plans to build up the Chinese armed services despite State Department plans to use American military aid as a lever to force Chiang into making some vital political, economic, and social reforms necessary to counteract the growing appeal of Chinese communists. John Carter Vincent, director of the State Department Office of Far Eastern Affairs, expressed misgivings about the size and relation to the Chinese government of the proposed military missions warning that without proper safeguards, the military missions might well soon become involved in intervention in China's internal and political affairs.<sup>51</sup>

However, the views of Vincent carried little weight in the fall of 1945, as administration officials reacted strongly to the increasing uncooperativeness and intransigence of the Soviet Union in resolving the problems of Eastern Europe. Setting the tone, President Truman vowed in retaliation to toughen U. S. policy toward the Soviet Union in the Far East and extend full support to the Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek. Truman's attitude was mirrored by Secretary of the Navy Forrestal along with Secretary of State James Brynes, and Secretary of War Robert Patterson, at a meeting on 6 November about future military assistance to Chiang and the employment of the marines. Only Patterson demonstrated uneasiness about the increasing American commitment to China.<sup>52</sup>

The problem of eliminating Japanese influence and countering Soviet power in China without becoming involved in China's civil war was

further compounded by the rapid demobilization of America's fighting forces, demanded by political constituents in the United States, which threatened to leave the United States with inadequate military manpower to support strategic commitments abroad. Aware of sentiments such as those of General Alexander A. Vandegrift, commandant of the Marine Corps, that the marines "could not continue to sustain the luxury of IIIAC in China"<sup>53</sup> in the face of precipitous demobilization, the JCS soon pressed Wedemeyer for a time-table to inactivate the China Theater Command and withdraw marine forces. Wedemeyer responded that the 53,000 marines then in China should begin withdrawing on 15 November because by that time nationalist forces in north China would be strong enough to assume their duties. As it became apparent that Chiang intended to divert troops to Manchuria rather than relieve American Marine units in north China, despite Wedemeyer's advice that the nationalists did not have enough troops to hold both Manchuria and north China, Wedemeyer initially reversed himself and stated that the marines were needed indefinitely. Realizing that Chiang was using U. S. forces to hold strategic areas while diverting troops to attack the communists, Wedemeyer refused to be manipulated, changed his mind again and recommended the immediate withdrawal of the marines on 15 November.<sup>54</sup>

Thrown into confusion by Wedemeyer's rapidly changing recommendations, top military and administration officials led by Byrnes, who believed that the marines were still necessary to ensure the prompt repatriation of Japanese forces, requested clarification of the situation from Wedemeyer. While awaiting Wedemeyer's response on

20 November, the secretaries of state, war, and navy met to discuss the China problem. Clearly showing his fear of the Soviet Union, Forrestal argued that the United States should not withdraw as a result of Soviet pressure and warned that doing so would "invite a vacuum of anarchy in Manchuria" into which "the Russians will flow."<sup>55</sup> Byrnes agreed that the marines were needed to counteract communist influence.

Wedemeyer's reply took the form of a twenty page report that clearly and eloquently described the difficult position of the United States in China. Wedemeyer concluded that Chiang could not stabilize the situation on southern China without "inaugurating economic, political, and social reforms through honest, competent civilian officials," something Chiang could not do without destroying the KMT base of power. In addition Chiang could not stabilize north China or recover Manchuria for months, probably years, without some satisfactory agreement with the Chinese communists and this appeared to be remote. In sum, Wedemeyer laid out the fundamental problem which would face American policy makers over the next five years; the United States could not completely withdraw from China without justifiably being charged with deserting a loyal wartime ally in the face of Soviet and Chinese Communist pressure. However, without direct intervention of significant numbers of American combat forces in the civil war, an action contrary to all previous policy, the Chinese Nationalists could not defeat the communists for some years, if ever. The longer it took to achieve nationalist victory, the more likely that the communists would in fact win, thus opening the door to Soviet domination of the half-billion people of China.<sup>56</sup>

In an even more hard-hitting report on 23 November, Wedemeyer claimed that the prompt disarming of Japanese forces was impossible because nationalist troops were being used to attack communist forces, that Japanese armed forces were being used by the nationalists to guard lines of communication, and that in certain areas the communists would move in if the Japanese were disarmed. Wedemeyer stated that the communists had launched a vicious propaganda campaign attempting to provoke U. S. Marines into actions which would "prove" that American forces were actively engaged in support of the nationalists, which would entice the Soviets into intervening on behalf of the communists. Wedemeyer further stated that the continued presence of the marines in north China would unmistakably involve American forces in fratricidal warfare. "If the unification of China and Manchuria under Chinese National forces is to be a U. S. policy, then involvement in fratricidal warfare and possibly a war with the Soviet Union must be accepted and would definitely require additional forces far beyond those presently available in the theater to implement the policy."<sup>57</sup>

Faced with the equally unpalatable alternatives of withdrawal or risking war with the Soviet Union, top level administration and military leaders indulged in an intense, two-day search for a solution to the China dilemma on 26 and 27 November. Leahy, Forrestal, and Patterson all chose to view Wedemeyer's reports as unduly pessimistic. While Leahy admonished Truman to give Chiang "every assistance except additional American combat troops,"<sup>58</sup> Forrestal and Patterson combined to urge Byrnes that "only the National Government appears to have a chance of unifying China," that U. S. Marines should remain to assist

Chiang's effort, and that the risk of incidental involvement in fratricidal warfare must be accepted.<sup>59</sup> Failure to support the nationalists, claimed Forrestal, would result in the Soviets achieving in the Far East "approximately the objectives Japan initially set out to accomplish" thus negating the entire purpose of the Pacific War.<sup>60</sup>

The already confused situation was further complicated as Ambassador Hurley, upon hearing rumors of an impending decision to abandon Chiang, threatened to resign. Hurley, in Washington at the time, had lost no opportunity to bemoan that interference from State Department personnel of dubious political allegiance was responsible for the difficulties in accomplishing what he saw as his mission, supporting the government of Chiang Kai-shek. Through the efforts of Byrnes and Forrestal, who along with Leahy sympathized with Hurley's views, Hurley was persuaded to remain on the job and pledged to return to China.

Meeting again the following morning, the secretaries of state, war, and navy, along with Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, continued their discussion of China. Forrestal adamantly pressed for continued assistance to the nationalists, stating that the United States could not "yank the marines out of China now."<sup>61</sup> Byrnes, however, had changed his views, maintaining that the "wise course would be to try to force the Chinese Nationalist Government and the CCP to get together on a compromise basis."<sup>62</sup> A third alternative, recommended by Wedemeyer in his reports, to submit the Manchurian question to United Nations arbitration, was rejected by all on grounds that China, having been recognized as one of the four great world powers by virtue of the Moscow and Cairo Declarations of World War II,



could not submit to such a proposal without losing considerable prestige, something Chiang would undoubtedly refuse to do. Agreement was only reached on the point that the marines should remain in China for the time being. Shortly after the meeting ended, Hurley shocked everyone by publicly announcing his resignation, placing the blame on "the Hydra-headed direction and confusion of our foreign policy."<sup>63</sup>

Reacting angrily to Hurley's surprise resignation, Truman called an emergency Cabinet meeting that evening. As each member voiced his concern over the confused state of America's China Policy, it became apparent that although views differed radically, few were willing to abandon Chiang for fear of adverse domestic political consequences. Therefore, at the suggestion of Secretary of Agriculture Clinton Anderson, the recently retired wartime chief of staff of the army, General George C. Marshall, was named as President Truman's new special envoy to China. It was hoped that Marshall's great stature and prestige would once again lend credibility to America's China Policy.<sup>64</sup>

The day following Hurley's resignation, Leahy met with Truman, Byrnes, and Marshall to lay the groundwork for Marshall's upcoming mission to China. Byrnes argued that Marshall should attempt to bring about a peaceful compromise between the KMT and the CCP by using U. S. aid as a lever if necessary. Leahy disagreed and took issue with the announced policy of not assisting in any fratricidal war in China which Leahy claimed "practically places us on the side of the Chinese Communists."<sup>65</sup> With the exact parameters of Marshall's mission still undefined, Truman leaned toward Leahy's view and vowed to support the nationalists at least until Japanese troops had been repatriated.

At the peak of the furor in Washington, King learned via State Department channels that Barbey, who commanded the 7th Fleet after relieving Kinkaid on 19 November, was preparing a report on the situation in north China at the behest of Under Secretary of the Navy Artemus Gates, who was visiting China at the time, and asked for Barbey's views to present to the secretaries of state, war, and navy. Anxious for information, King ordered Barbey on 28 November to expedite sending the report to the secretary of the navy.

Barbey, who had had considerable diplomatic experience early in his naval career, viewed the situation in China differently than most naval officers at the time. In his report, Barbey recommended "that the United States exercise a more forceful policy in demanding settlement of the nationalist-communist dispute. This settlement may be obtained by insisting the Central Government turn over to the communists those areas which they (the communists) now control militarily, if it were not for the presence of the Japanese and marines. In return the communists must recognize Chiang Kai-shek as the political and military head of China. This in effect will be a loose federation of states, but will make possible a development of Chinese nationalism which someday may result in the followers of Mao Tse-tung thinking of themselves as Chinese first and communists second."<sup>67</sup> Barbey concluded with the statement, "If the nationalists refuse to recede from their present position, I recommend the immediate withdrawal of marines to avoid being involved in the inevitable civil war."<sup>68</sup>

Although some members of the press were convinced that Barbey's report caused great impact in Washington, Barbey's views were definitely

not in accord with those of Leahy and Forrestal, who would have passed them on to Truman with little enthusiasm at best. As an added handicap, Barbey was somewhat distrusted in navy circles due to his close and effective wartime collaboration with the navy's nemesis, General Douglas MacArthur. Barbey's unique ability to get along with MacArthur left some naval officers such as Kinkaid with the impression that Barbey was somehow disloyal.<sup>69</sup>

However, Barbey had discussed his views with the chargé at the U. S. embassy in Chungking on 23 November. Although informing Barbey that compromise was unlikely because Chiang was unwilling to concede anything and because the Chinese communists were becoming aware that time was on their side, the chargé, Walter Robertson, passed Barbey's recommendations on to Brynes on 24 November,<sup>70</sup> where they, along with the views of Acheson and Vincent, undoubtedly influenced Brynes in his shift in favor of a compromise settlement that became evident during the meetings of 26 and 27 November.

As planning for the Marshall mission continued in the first week of December, the forces favoring compromise received an added boost when a communique from MacArthur, Wedemeyer, and Raymond Spruance, now Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, recommended that "U.S. assistance to China...be made available as a basis for negotiations by the American ambassador to bring together and effect a compromise between the major opposing groups in order to promote a united, democratic China."<sup>71</sup> Despite Leahy's objection to the inclusion of communists in any government receiving American assistance, Truman agreed to State Department recommendations that General Marshall attempt to foster a

broad based coalition Chinese National Government, including the communists, in an attempt to halt the violence that threatened American interests in the Far East.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, in a statement made public on 15 December, Truman committed the United States to mediating the dispute between the communists and the nationalists. This would remain the overriding U. S. policy objective in China throughout the following year.

U. S. NAVAL OPERATIONS DURING THE MARSHALL MISSION:  
DECEMBER 1945 - JANUARY 1947

During the period of high-level government confusion and uncertainty regarding the future direction of America's China policy preceding the Marshall Mission, Rear Admiral Stuart S. "Sunshine" Murray, arrived in China under orders to survey the existing Chinese naval establishment and make recommendations for the formation of a postwar Naval Advisory Group (NAG) to China. Rear Admiral Murray's original orders stated he was to become commander of the still existing Naval Group China. However, Admiral Cooke saw the adverse implications of further close cooperation with Tai Li's secret police and cancelled the orders. The revised orders stated that Murray would participate in the SACO termination negotiations then being conducted by Barbey with a view toward determining which useful SACO functions could be continued under the proposed NAG without acquiring the stigma of the present Naval Group China.<sup>73</sup> Prior to his departure, Rear Admiral Murray, who had no previous experience with China, was briefed on the Chinese situation by Hurley and Rear Admiral Miles, now recovered from his September lapse and working with the "Friendship Project" in Washington.

Upon arrival in China, Rear Admiral Murray found relations between Vice Admiral Barbey's staff and the remnants of Naval Group China, now commanded by Captain I. F. Beyerly, to be extremely bitter and uncooperative. Beyerly chafed under the new authority of the Seventh Fleet Commander and worried that Vice Admiral Barbey's termination negotiations would result in loss of U. S. naval prestige

in the eyes of the KMT leadership, who desired the continuation of SACO activities, particularly the police training, and feared losing the direct access to the CNO that the KMT had enjoyed during the war.<sup>74</sup> Despite Chinese reluctance and Beyerly's heated objections, Barbey doggedly conducted negotiations and drafted a SACO termination agreement on 7 December which served as a basis for later government-to-government negotiations for closing out SACO.

Despite Barbey's evident hostility toward SACO, some of his other actions gave the Nationalists hope for continued U. S. naval support. Meeting in November with Chiang and General Wedemeyer, Vice Admiral Barbey agreed to transmit a Chinese request for U. S. naval assistance in transporting six additional Chinese armies to Manchuria. With Navy support and amplification by MacArthur, Wedemeyer and Admiral Spruance, CINCPAC, on 7 December, the proposed transportation of Chinese troops to Manchuria received JCS acceptance and was approved by President Truman on 11 December, prior to any final decision being reached on the exact nature of the Marshall Mission.<sup>75</sup>

Additional Nationalist confidence in further American support was assured by Fleet Admiral King's approval of Barbey's proposal to set up a small training center at the port of Tsingtao to train the Chinese to operate diesel-driven LST amphibious transports which could then be manned by Chinese crews, thus relieving the Seventh Fleet--which was increasingly plagued by manpower shortages--of responsibility of transporting more Chinese armies. Beginning on 10 December, the first class of two hundred began training on three LST's designated for that purpose.<sup>76</sup>

Throughout December, Murray and his staff surveyed Chinese port facilities and observed the general state of the Chinese Navy. He attempted to discuss the naval situation with six-star Admiral Chen--technically the senior admiral in the world--but the aged officer seemed little concerned that his navy was virtually nonexistent. Meeting later with Tai Li, Murray was told that Chen would be replaced by the more capable, cooperative, and energetic, Rear Admiral Chou. Tai Li greatly impressed Murray, in particular because Tai Li knew the full details of Murray's top secret orders, indicating the extent to which his organization had access to highly-privileged U. S. Navy information.<sup>77</sup> Murray was apparently ignorant of a 22 December memorandum from Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson to Forrestal which requested that "for the time being no officers of your organization engage in conversations with Chinese officials which might encourage the Chinese to hope that this Government is contemplating the extension of any type of assistance to China, except in accordance with the recommendations of General Marshall"<sup>78</sup> Thus Murray continued his talks with Chinese officials in Canton and on the island of Formosa regarding the future needs and plans of the Chinese Navy.

Arriving in China at the end of December 1945, Marshall achieved surprisingly rapid success in his mediation efforts. By the second week in January a cease-fire was in effect, delegates from all parties to a Political Consultative Conference were discussing differences, and Marshall chaired top-level negotiations between the KMT representative, General Chang Chun, and the CCP representative, Chou En-Lai. Despite superficial amity, the reasons for the cease-fire agreement

were quite different and boded ill for the future. The CCP was aware that as long as American troops were holding strategic points in North China, the Nationalists could and would be able to sufficiently concentrate their forces to decisively defeat the communists. By appearing cooperative during the negotiations, the CCP could ensure the early withdrawal of American troops and still remain secure under the protection of the American-sponsored cease-fire. On the other hand, the KMT could not afford to appear to be intransigent and, thus, to receive sole blame from the Americans for a continuation of the fighting. The promise to ship additional troops to Manchuria, along with the establishment of the training center at Tsingtao and the actions of Murray's Naval Survey Group, encouraged the Nationalists to assume that they really enjoyed the full support of the United States and could thus enter into cosmetic agreements with the communists. Because of the Nationalists' apparent willingness to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the civil war, Marshall gave his approval in principal to U. S. naval plans for an assistance mission to China then nearing completion in Washington and strongly recommended by Rear Admiral Murray and the new Commander of the Seventh Fleet, Admiral Charles Maynard "Savvy" Cooke.

Admiral Cooke, formerly Chief of Staff to Fleet Admiral King, agreed to command the Seventh Fleet, where his own stature and prestige would enhance the navy's influence in the Far East vis-a-vis the army and General MacArthur, then Supreme Allied Commander in Japan. Although possessed of an intense, coldly logical mind,



Cooke tended to be greatly affected by injustices, to which he often responded with sincere humanitarian gestures. Cooke sympathized with the plight of the Chinese people. Moreover, his lack of experience with China led him, like Leahy, Hurley, Forrestal, and others, to view the Chinese Communist Party solely as a tool of Soviet foreign policy; thus he relegated the sweeping social, economic, and political revolution then taking place in China to a secondary role within a larger postwar framework of confrontation between the United States and Soviet-inspired communism.

Always at the forefront of those who distrusted the motives of the Soviet Union, Cooke's preconceptions were quickly reinforced after reading Barbey's reports of Soviet intransigence and uncooperativeness. These documents chronicled Soviet procrastination in withdrawing from Manchuria, claimed that captured Japanese arms were being turned over to the CCP by the Soviets, and argued that the Soviets had already stripped Manchuria of virtually all usable industrial machinery, including over 1,000 locomotives, 20,000 railroad cars, and 10,000 autos.<sup>79</sup> Because of his fear of the spread of communism, Cooke viewed the Nationalist government, however faulty, as the best means to prevent the extension of Soviet influence into Asia. His acceptance of the KMT as the sole legitimate political force in China, aided by past U. S. Navy cooperativeness, soon led to a close and friendly relationship between Cooke and Chiang. Although bound by duty to support Marshall's program for mediation, Cooke's sympathies clearly lay with the Nationalists.

Within a couple of weeks after his arrival in China, Admiral Cooke, along with Rear Admiral Murray, conducted personal negotiations with Chiang over future U. S. naval assistance to China. Initial plans developed in Washington sought to provide China with the capability to conduct amphibious lifts of troops between coastal and interior points and to carry out internal policing and suppression of river and coastal bandits. Thus, Cooke told Chiang that China should receive amphibious transports and coastal patrol craft. Chiang felt that because the United States had recognized China as a great power, and thus, for reasons of prestige, China should be given an aircraft carrier, something the Chinese Navy was absolutely incapable of operating anytime in the foreseeable future. After prolonged bargaining, Chiang and Cooke compromised. The United States should provide China with the ships originally recommended, along with several destroyer-escorts, plus the possibility of a prestigious light cruiser and some submarines; these latter deliveries would depend upon the progress of the expanded training program at Tsingtao.<sup>80</sup> Following this discussion, Cooke avidly concurred in Murray's recommendation that 271 surplus ships be turned over to the Chinese Navy and that an American naval assistance mission be quickly established.

Murray's reports arrived in Washington in February 1946 where they received considerable acceptance even in some formerly-reluctant State Department circles. Washington's change of attitude was prompted by a more widespread apprehension of Soviet designs following Premier Joseph Stalin's statement that peaceful coexistence was

ultimately impossible and because of increasingly belligerent Soviet positions in regard to Eastern Europe, Turkey, Iran, and Manchuria. On 15 February the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee recommended approval of the JCS plan for coordinated army and navy missions to China. Shortly thereafter the State Department received from the U. S. Embassy in Moscow George F. Kennan's famous 8,000-word "long" telegram, which stressed the need to counter Russian expansionism by bolstering countries which rimmed the Soviet-dominated area, through political, economic, and military means. This message laid the groundwork for what was to become the Truman administration's policy of "containment" of the Soviet Union. Kennan's telegram so impressed Navy Secretary Forrestal that he made it required reading for top ranking naval officers, and he was also instrumental in arranging Kennan's recall from Moscow in order that he could expound his views to officers attending the newly-created National War College.<sup>81</sup>

With prevailing currents of opinion clearly backing such a move, Truman used his still-existing emergency war powers and ordered the secretaries of war and navy to take appropriate steps to form coordinated army and navy missions to support and strengthen the Nationalist government. However, the proviso against taking either side in the civil war remained in force. A week and a half after the President's authorization of the military advisory groups to China, former British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill delivered in Missouri a speech--read beforehand by Leahy--which stated that an "Iron Curtain" had fallen across Europe. The mindset of the "cold

war" had become clearly established in both the Western and Soviet Camps.

As the new Cold War became a fact of life, vessels of the U. S. Navy were busily engaged in transporting millions of soldiers and civilians displaced by the previous war. Operation "Magic Carpet," the transport of hundreds of thousands of American servicemen back to the United States, occupied most Seventh and Pacific Fleet transports in the Far East. The mammoth job of repatriating an estimated four-million Japanese soldiers and civilians in non-Soviet occupied areas of China was begun by fourteen LST's of the Seventh Fleet in mid-November 1945. By early 1946 nearly 100 LST's were involved in repatriation duty. The acute manpower shortages experienced by the Seventh Fleet as a result of rapid demobilization necessitated the early turnover of American ships to be manned by Japanese crews, initially under Marine guard. In addition to the LST's, the U. S. War Shipping Administration transferred 125 liberty ships to the U. S. Army to be manned by Japanese and some Chinese crews. Although vessels of the U. S. Navy performed repatriation duty when free from assignments of higher priority, the vast majority of Japanese repatriates were carried without incident aboard the Japanese-manned American vessels.

As Japanese presence in China dwindled throughout the spring of 1946, and U. S. Marine forces dropped from over 50,000 to about 34,000, tensions once again began to build as negotiations between the KMT and CCP stalled and because the Soviets remained in Manchuria. Although the Russians refrained from directly supporting the Chinese

communists in Manchuria, their continued occupation enabled the CCP to establish a firmer hold over much of the area. In an effort to prompt swift Soviet withdrawal by giving them no excuse to stay, Marshall and Wedemeyer advocated an early termination of the China Theater Command to take place on 1 May 1946, and further reductions in the U. S. Marine troop levels. Although Cooke felt that the withdrawals should not take place before definite evidence of Soviet withdrawal from Manchuria, the JCS agreed to the early date, compelled by the drastic reduction in American combat capability and domestic pressure to bring troops home. Despite Cooke's apprehensions, the long-awaited Soviet withdrawal began in March 1946. As KMT and CCP forces rushed to fill the vacuum left by the retreating Soviets, the civil war threatened to erupt anew.

Starting in March, transports of the Seventh Fleet, in fulfillment of earlier pledges to Chiang, began to transport over 200,000 troops of the Chinese Nationalist 6th, 71st, 1st, 60th, and 93rd Armies from ports in south China to Manchuria. When the first of these troops arrived in Manchuria, the truce arranged by Marshall, then away in Washington for consultations, broke down. During Marshall's March absence, Chiang requested the transport of two additional armies to Manchuria, and he was supported by Cooke and the Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Admiral Nimitz.<sup>82</sup> In addition, U. S. Navy landing craft shipped food up the Yangtze River to famine-ravaged Hunan Province and returned downstream with cargoes of weapons and supplies for Chiang's armies in Manchuria. Increasingly threatened by the influx of KMT troops, the communists vehemently protested the U. S.

Navy's support of the Nationalist Army. Despite the communist complaint, Seventh Fleet transports continued the shipment of Chinese armies throughout April and into May. On the day Marshall returned to China the communists flagrantly violated the ceasefire by attacking and capturing the Manchurian city of Changchan, and the Nationalists countered with effective offensives of their own.

While Marshall vainly tried to stop the renewed fighting, a controversy erupted in the Navy Department in Washington over reports that Tai Li was to be named head of the newly organized Chinese Department of the Navy. One faction, led by Rear Admiral Miles and other members of NGC and the "Friendship Project," sang the praises of Tai's wartime cooperation with the U. S. Navy and warned that if the U. S. Navy did not wholeheartedly support his appointment, it would be an affront to the Chinese and would seriously damage American naval prestige in China. The opposing faction, led by the Far Eastern section of the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), argued that if the truth about Tai's dreaded Secret Police and his gangster connections were widely known, the navy was likely to be the object of damaging criticism in the United States.<sup>83</sup> ONI wanted to keep as much distance between Tai and the U. S. Navy as possible. As bitter memorandums circulated around the Navy Department, the problem was unexpectedly solved on 24 April 1946 by Tai Li's death in a mysterious plane crash near the tomb of Sun Yat-sen. The entire controversy proved to be the last gasp for Naval Group China. By the middle of 1946, the SACO termination agreement was ratified by the United States and China, and NGC shortly ceased to be.

Meanwhile, fighting in Manchuria spilled over into north China, and U. S. Marines guarding isolated bridges and roads found themselves in an increasingly precarious situation. Chiang's strategy of sending his troops to recover Manchuria, the most industrialized and, hence, most prized area of China, left large areas of north China guarded only by relatively small numbers of American Marines, who could not possibly prevent communist movements through the area. Shortly after the deactivation of China Theater Headquarters, the departure of Wedemeyer, and the resumption of operational control of the marines by Cooke, marines were involved in several firefights with communists. On 21 May, a marine reconnaissance party south of Tientsin was ambushed and one marine was killed.

One week after this fatal incident, the U. S. Navy decommissioned four LST's and one LSM at Tsingtao and turned them over to newly-trained officers and men of the Nationalist Chinese Navy. The U. S. Navy transferred the vessels under wartime lend-lease authority which was to expire upon congressional passage of Murray's plan to provide 271 surplus ships to the Chinese Navy and Maritime Customs Service. Congress was also soon to act on separate army and navy bills to provide military advice and assistance to the Republic of China. Despite some earlier congressional criticism of marine activities and American naval "gunboat diplomacy" in China,<sup>84</sup> the 271 ship bill passed as Public Law 512 in the summer of 1946. Although the Armed Services Committee acted favorably on the Naval Assistance Bill, the army bill did not pass before the congressional session ended. Rather than embarrass the army, the navy decided to seek

legislation with the army for a Joint Military Advisory Group. Thus, the Naval Group Survey Board, headed by Murray, became the semi-official Prospective Naval Advisory Group. Additional June developments saw the departure from Miami for China of two lend-lease destroyer escorts and four minesweepers manned by Chinese who had been trained in the United States during the war.

Also in June 1946, General Marshall succeeded in arranging a second truce and reinstituting negotiations; clearly, however, neither side trusted the other. The KMT demanded that the CCP submit their armed forces to the authority of the Nationalist government before a political settlement could be reached. In turn, the communists refused to give up the protection afforded by their army before the CCP had been granted its fair share of meaningful political power. Because treachery and deceit marred all previous KMT and CCP relations, both sides were firmly convinced that the ultimate solution of who would dominate China would be decided by force of arms. Because neither side was truly interested in compromise, except in matters of expedience or survival, the valiant efforts of Marshall were doomed again to failure.

Ten days before the June truce expired on the 29th of the month, three LST's of the new American-equipped and trained Chinese Navy sortied from the training center at Tsingtao and proceeded to shell the communist-held ports of Chefoo and Weihaiwei, after the CCP refused Chiang's demand that the ports be evacuated.<sup>85</sup> Shortly after this highly publicized incident, spokesmen for the Democratic League, a liberal noncommunist political organization, blasted the



U. S. Navy for "pursuing an independent policy in China to the detriment of the Army and State Department" and for "continuing former SACO arrangements under a new guise and on a large scale."<sup>86</sup> KMT secret police shortly thereafter assassinated two prominent members of the League.<sup>87</sup>

Not as easily intimidated as the League, the Communists issued their own blistering attack upon U. S. policy, claiming that American military and financial aid to the Nationalist government encouraged the belligerent, uncompromising stance of the KMT. Making their displeasure perfectly clear, communists deliberately ambushed a motor convoy near Tientsin, killing four U. S. Marines and wounding eleven more.<sup>88</sup> In their diatribe against the United States, the communists managed to ignore the fact that at that moment, three Seventh Fleet LST's had just evacuated nearly three thousand communist guerrillas of the East River Column from an untenable position in south China north to Chefoo.<sup>89</sup> This action was the result of wearisome negotiations undertaken by Marshall to prove the fairness of U. S. mediation. Although greatly discouraged by these events, he continued his efforts.

In early July Secretary of the Navy Forrestal visited China for a first-hand look. Following meetings with Cooke, and the chargé at the U. S. Embassy in the new Nationalist capital of Nanking, Forrestal was convinced that the U. S. Marine forces had been the primary stabilizing force in north China throughout the winter of 1945-1946. To remove them, thought Forrestal, would be to court chaos and lay China open for Soviet exploitation. At the

suggestion of Cooke, Forrestal conferred in Tokyo with General MacArthur, who explained that, 'while the Nationalist government in China might not be the best in the world, and while Chiang might be all things he was accused of being, nevertheless they were on our side and they should be supported.'<sup>90</sup> With this assessment Forrestal wholeheartedly agreed.

Returning to Washington, Forrestal pressed for a greater American commitment to Chiang at cabinet meetings in July and August and proposed that the Marines be withdrawn from their isolated guard duties but remain as a concentrated and effective striking force. He contended that the need to counteract Soviet influence overrode the risk of intervening in the internal affairs of China. Forrestal's attitude was mirrored by Leahy, who felt that if 'we should fail to assist the Central Government in China, we would have no friends in either faction and no friends in China.'<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, Truman approved Marshall's recommendation for an arms and spare parts embargo on China in a desperate attempt to bring a halt to the fighting. Marshall warned Chiang that despite recent military successes, the Nationalists were gravely overextended, and that the Nationalist economy, beset by rampaging inflation, would collapse before a military victory over the CCP could be achieved. Supremely confident of his own destiny, Chiang chose to ignore Marshall's advice as he had done that of his Soviet advisors in 1925 and Stilwell in 1944.

Frustrated by the bad faith exhibited by both communists and Nationalists, Marshall, in conjunction with the newly-appointed Ambassador to China, John Leighton Stuart, issued a statement on

11 August to the effect that civil war was inevitable. Although Marshall vowed to continue his attempts to bring about a peaceful, negotiated compromise, few, including himself, held out much hope of success. The day following Marshall's announcement, Cooke admonished his superiors that "there is a need at this time for a reexamination and reevaluation of our naval establishment in China."<sup>92</sup> Cooke went on to advocate the establishment of more and larger port facilities at Shanghai and Tsingtao, a recommendation which Nimitz previously had opposed as had the State Department, on grounds that Washington needed to avoid any appearance of establishing a permanent military presence in China. To the contrary, Cooke questioned "whether there is any other area of U. S. naval activity in which the resources of men and money made available to us by current personnel and fiscal budgets can be applied with greater advantage to the future than in the Far Western Pacific."<sup>93</sup>

Cooke's estimate of the strategic importance of the Far East ran counter to that of top level army and navy planners in Washington. According to the Joint War Plans Committee's study "Pincher," a war with the Soviet Union would most likely start due to the tensions in the Mid-East over Iran and Turkey. In the event of such a war, the greatest threat to the United States and Allies was the preponderance of Soviet land forces in Eastern Europe and the Mid-East. In a "Pincher" war, the Soviets were deemed capable of overrunning Western Europe, Italy, possibly Spain, Greece, Turkey, most of the Mid-East, in addition to Manchuria and north China, despite American use of the very few atomic bombs then in existence.<sup>94</sup>

With regard to the Far East, the position of any American ground forces on the Asian mainland was considered untenable, despite the belief that the Soviets would not, or could not, exert as strong an effort in the Far East as they might elsewhere. Accordingly, American marines in China and U. S. Army troops in Korea would immediately be evacuated to Japan where they would be relatively safe due to U. S. naval superiority over the rather ineffectual Soviet naval forces in the area. These troops might later be used to retake parts of Asia depending on the progress being made in the reconquest of Europe and the protection of vital oil supplies in the Mid-East.<sup>95</sup>

As the "Pincher" studies got underway, there were indications of a further breakdown in America's peace effort in China late in August. Despite pressure from Marshall to provide troops for the relief of U. S. Marines on increasingly hazardous railroad and bridge guard, Chiang planned instead to use his troops in an offensive in Jehol Province, relying on the marines to cover his lines of communication. Realizing that Chiang's planned offensive was being made possible because of the presence of U. S. Marines, Marshall asked Cooke to order General Rockey to hurry arrangements with the Chinese to begin turning over outposts to the Nationalists. Rockey's arrangements turned out to allow plenty of time for Chiang to undertake the Jehol offensive before having to commit troops to the relief of the Americans. Displeased by this, Marshall instructed Cooke to order Rockey to withdraw earlier, regardless of whether Nationalists were present to relieve them. Both Cooke and Rockey immediately balked, claiming that such action was militarily unsound and would

result in communist capture of key positions.<sup>96</sup> Marshall ordered them to comply and then personally conferred with Chiang. Faced with losing his vital lines of communication, Chiang quickly came up with the troops necessary to effect a timely relief of the American outposts late in September. As a result, marine forces, by then reduced to roughly 17,000 men, were more safely concentrated at Tientsin, Tsingtao, and several other major cities.

In October, Marshall warned Truman and the State Department that his mission was no longer serving a useful purpose because of the repeated deception and violation of agreements by both sides, and the vitriolic Chinese Communist propaganda campaign then being waged. Although Marshall remained in China for another two months, America's attempt to peacefully mediate the dispute between two factions--each convinced that the survival of one meant the extinction of the other--was at an apparent end. Although Marshall's inability to achieve a settlement would later be used to tarnish his outstanding career, General Stilwell summed up Marshall's valiant effort with the comment, "But what did they expect? George Marshall can't walk on water."<sup>97</sup>

## U. S. NAVAL OPERATIONS IN CHINA: JANUARY 1947 - FEBRUARY 1948

On 6 January 1947, President Truman recalled General Marshall. In a public statement just prior to his departure from China two days later, Marshall placed most of the blame for the failure of his mediation efforts on the vicious propaganda of the radical members of the Chinese Communist Party and the intransigence of the dominant military-oriented, reactionary elements of the Kuomintang. Marshall stated that the prevention of prolonged civil war could only be achieved through the institution of political, social, and economic reforms that would result in increased importance for the moderates and liberals of the KMT. Only such reforms would negate the appeal of the revolutionary communist programs and thus deprive the CCP of its major strengths; the support of growing numbers of disillusioned intellectuals and the disadvantaged peasantry.<sup>1</sup> Upon arrival in Washington, Marshall made clear his convictions that any military aid less than large scale commitment of American combat troops would only result in useless extension of the civil war and could not save the Nationalists in the absence of vitally needed reforms. Nominated to be Secretary of State following Byrne's resignation on 7 January 1947, Marshall soon became the chief architect of America's foreign policy.

The U. S. Navy's view of the China problem and its solution differed greatly from that of the new Secretary of State. As early as September 1946, when the Marshall Mission began to show outward signs of failure, naval strategic planners in Washington sought to

formulate a policy which would "justify U. S. intervention and assistance to the KMT."<sup>2</sup> Using the threat of Soviet domination of Manchuria as its strategic rationale and making the assumption that the Chinese communists were merely "tools of Soviet foreign policy,"<sup>3</sup> a navy position paper recommended that should mediation efforts fail and full scale civil war break out, then the "United States should support the Chinese National Government with military and other supplies and advice to aid the Chinese National Government in establishing control over Manchuria, and thus insure against Soviet domination thereof."<sup>4</sup> A Joint Staff planning paper reviewed by the JCS on 17 October 1946 bore all the hallmarks of the navy position.<sup>5</sup> However, Fleet Admiral Leahy recommended that no action be taken on the paper because it contained issues of political rather than strictly military policy. As an insider at the White House, Leahy realized that the prevailing opinion, greatly influenced by Marshall's reports coming out of China, did not favor greater commitment to the Nationalist cause. Because the Marshall Mission was then not yet at an official end, Leahy reasoned that the time was not right for the JCS to make an open break with established Administration policy. Accordingly, the JCS accepted Leahy's recommendations.<sup>6</sup>

The official termination of American mediation efforts on 29 January 1947 unleashed an intensive pro-Nationalist lobbying effort by the U. S. Navy. Admiral Cooke visited Ambassador Stuart in Nanking and unveiled plans for increasing marine strength at the U. S. naval anchorage at Tsingtao from 1900 to 4800 to compensate for scheduled marine withdrawals from the Peiping-Tientsin area.

Cooke also expressed a desire to "turn the spotlight" on the formerly secret naval training project at Tsingtao, thus clearly publicizing American support for the Nationalist Navy.<sup>7</sup> In Washington, Forrestal notified Marshall that the U. S. Navy sought to implement the provisions of the Naval Assistance Bill (P.L. 512), held in abeyance since the arms embargo of July 1946. In the navy's view the terms of P.L. 512 provided sufficient justification for the establishment of an official independent Naval Advisory Group.<sup>8</sup> Receipt of Ambassador Stuart's negative reactions to Cooke's proposals and their political implications distressed Marshall, who immediately asked Forrestal to issue orders to discontinue both Cooke's projects.

At a meeting between Marshall, Forrestal, and Secretary of War Patterson on 12 February, Marshall more clearly defined America's China Policy. The United States would seek to "encourage China to achieve unity through democratic means" and while remaining sympathetic to the Nationalists would "withhold military aid to China in any form which would contribute to or encourage civil war."<sup>9</sup>

Marshall, supported by State Department director of the office of Far Eastern affairs, John Vincent, worried that military assistance would encourage the reactionary elements of the KMT in their stand against the implementation of much needed reforms, thereby precipitating the ultimate collapse of the Republic of China. Forrestal disagreed with Marshall's position and maintained that any lessening of support for the Nationalists would result in a proportionate increase in Soviet influence. With issues relating to the navy in China still unresolved, Marshall agreed to Forrestal's 8 February



suggestion for a meeting between State and Navy Department officials to include Admiral Cooke and Rear Admiral Murray.

Arriving in Washington in late February, Cooke and Murray expounded their views before concerned Navy and State Department officials and as a result of Forrestal's request met personally with Leahy and President Truman. Relying on his first-hand knowledge of China, Cooke advocated retaining sizable marine forces at Tsingtao, suggested giving large stocks of "unserviceable" ammunition to the Nationalists, complained that some of Marshall's aids were "left-wingers," recommended the dispatch of a "high-level" board to China to reevaluate U. S. policy, and warned that "failure to support Chiang would result in victory for the Communists."<sup>10</sup> Although Truman stated that he had "never heard some of these things that way before,"<sup>11</sup> he gave no indication of doing anything but to continue to rely primarily on Marshall's judgments of the situation.

On 20 February, Admiral Cooke attended a meeting that included Marshall, Vincent, Forrestal, Nimitz, and Vice Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, Deputy CNO for Strategic Plans and later CNO, and Captain Robert L. Dennison, Assistant CNO for Politico-Military Affairs and later Naval Aide to President Truman. After prolonged and sometimes heated discussion, the State Department and the navy reached basic understanding on several outstanding issues. Marshall conditionally agreed that an executive order implementing P.L. 512 and beginning the transfer of 271 surplus ships should be issued and that a modest Naval Advisory Group in support of the program should be maintained. Marshall had no objection to navy desires to seek authorization for

a separate official Naval Advisory Group provided the War Department agreed and that the State Department conduct the necessary negotiations. Although Marshall felt that the vessels which the Chinese Navy received from the United States would not be able to participate in the civil war for some time, he reserved the right to discontinue such U. S. naval support if it appeared detrimental to America's interest in a peaceful settlement of the China problem.<sup>12</sup>

The navy agreed to Marshall's request that no extensive shore facilities at Tsingtao or Shanghai, long advocated by Cooke, be established and that marine forces at Tsingtao not exceed 3,500, despite Cooke's contention that more troops were necessary to protect American lives and property. Stating that the protection of U. S. nationals or other foreigners was the responsibility of the Government of China and not the United States, Marshall held firm on the 3,500 level and warned the navy to expect further downward revision of that figure. Admiral Cooke also brought up the problem of disposing 4,000 tons of "unservicable" ammunition, which although too unstable for shipment back to the United States was still fit for use by Nationalist troops. Rather than destroy the ammunition or give it to the Nationalists outright, Marshall recommended that the ammunition just be abandoned and the Nationalists discreetly told of where and when such action might occur.<sup>13</sup>

While the navy and State Department discussed their differences over China policy, events were occurring on the other side of the world that would ultimately complicate the Administration's stand with respect to aid for China. On 27 February, financially beleaguered

Great Britain informed the United States that she could no longer afford to assist the efforts of Greece and Turkey to withstand intense Soviet pressure. One week later, the Government of Greece, then engaged in a desperate struggle for survival with an indigenous communist insurgency, officially asked for American aid. Clearly seeing the potential danger to the vital European lifeline through the eastern Mediterranean, Truman and Marshall responded by announcing a sweeping economic and military aid package to Greece and Turkey with the expressed intent of stemming Soviet expansionism. This policy of "containment" soon to be known as the "Truman Doctrine" was broadly supported in military and administration circles, particularly by Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, who had been pushing Kennan's concepts of "containment" for some months.

In order to ensure Congressional approval of the aid program, the Truman administration implied that such aid would be given to any country threatened by the spread of communism. The potential problem for the administration's China policy was stated by Fleet Admiral Leahy, who felt that "the two widely separate situations (China and Greece) appear to me to be so identical, except that the preservation of a non-Soviet government in China would be much more valuable to the future safety of the United States than the protection of the Greek and Turkish states."<sup>14</sup> Leahy's evaluation of the relative strategic value of China compared to the threat to Western Europe and Mid-East oil posed by Soviet actions in the eastern Mediterranean was not shared by the administration or many military strategists for that matter. Given America's then limited conventional and atomic

military capability, the United States was forced to apply its resources in only the most important areas. Nevertheless, Leahy, along with growing numbers of others in Congress and the business community with interests in China, found it inconsistent that the United States would refuse military aid to the Nationalists while giving the same to the equally corrupt, inefficient, but hard-pressed government of Greece.

Following discussions in Washington, Cooke returned to China intending to have Ambassador Stuart initiate negotiations for the formation of an independent Naval Advisory Group, promptly forgetting Marshall's proviso that the War Department be consulted first. In addition to reminding Cooke of this fact, Stuart also disagreed with Cooke's plans to withdraw marines from the Tientsin area, then scheduled for 28 April, by way of Tsingtao due to the seriously deteriorating Nationalist position outside the port. Stuart strongly felt that the initial movement of marines should be directly out of China, thus clearly demonstrating to the KMT that it could not count on U. S. military aid. In a flurry of messages and meetings in which Ambassador Stuart accused Cooke of "requesting that the Embassy act in an improper fashion,"<sup>15</sup> no agreement was reached and both parties appealed to Washington for a decision. Marshall supported Stuart's position. Shortly thereafter Nimitz issued instructions that marines at Tientsin were to be withdrawn directly from China with no stopover at Tsingtao. In addition, navy drafts of a separate Naval Advisory Group proposal were soon sent to the War Department for approval.

The U. S. Embassy's victory in the latest dispute with Admiral Cooke only further soured relations between the navy and State Department in China. Cooke had already ingratiated himself with State Department officials by interfering several times, for humanitarian reasons, in repatriations of former German Nazis from China. Feeling that the State officials involved were unduly arbitrary and vindictive, Cooke appealed directly to high-level members of the Nationalist government, with whom he had developed close friendships. Thus, several Germans were removed from repatriation lists.<sup>16</sup> Despite the humanitarian fairness of Cooke's particular actions, his ability to bypass normal diplomatic channels greatly distressed Embassy officials.

Cooke soon came under fire from a different source in the form of widely-read columnist Drew Pearson, who wrote articles labeling Cooke as a "Nazi sympathizer" and accusing him of dealing with the Chinese black market. Although the first charge was grossly distorted and the second completely false, Cooke was admonished by Nimitz to refrain from any actions which could remotely result in bad press for the navy.<sup>17</sup> Nimitz was fearful of the effects of a poor navy image at a time when proposals then before Congress to unify the Armed Services threatened navy independence. Cooke responded by stating that it was a well-known Soviet tactic to attempt to "bring discredit upon responsible U. S. commanders,"<sup>18</sup> but admitted that the source of such scurrilous gossip was probably a disgruntled junior officer reprimanded by Cooke some months before.

Admiral Cooke's personal troubles were not the only problem facing the United States in China, for on the night of 4-5 April

an overwhelming force of Chinese communists attacked the large marine ammunition dump at Hsin Ho, near Tientsin, killing five marines and wounding sixteen more. The communists successfully escaped with an unknown quantity of "unservicable" ammunition. When informed of the attack while at the Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow, Marshall requested that the responsibility for guarding of such ammunition dumps be immediately turned over to the Nationalists in order to remove the possibility of further marine involvement in politically volatile clashes with the communists, and to demonstrate to the CCP that premeditated attacks on American forces would result in greater U. S. sympathy and aid to the Nationalists.<sup>19</sup> On 9 April, Cooke was instructed to expedite Marshall's request but did not take action quickly enough to satisfy Ambassador Stuart, who stated "the full intention of action and speed which General Marshall desired [the transfer] be executed has not been fully grasped."<sup>20</sup> Following another round of messages and five more days, marines under Cooke's command finally turned the dumps over to Nationalist troops on 21 April.<sup>21</sup> Although Cooke's reasons for delaying the implementation of Marshall's request remained unclear, the turnover of the dumps relieved the United States of the sticky problem of the so-called "unservicable" ammunition.

Throughout the spring of 1947 the Nationalists' military position in Manchuria and north China seriously deteriorated. Although Chiang's forces achieved a much publicized victory by the capture of the communist capital at Yen-an, the communists had in fact given up the city without a fight. The KMT found itself garrisoning yet another city

at the end of long, vulnerable lines of communication. Morale of Nationalist troops was crumbling, and spiraling inflation which tripled the price of rice in two months resulted in several rice riots and widespread civilian discontent with the KMT government.<sup>22</sup>

Concerned by the increasingly precarious position of the Nationalists, navy strategic planners in Washington once again began pressing for a formal policy statement by the JCS. In a paper prepared for the navy's Strategic Plans Division by General Worton, USMC, on the necessity for maintaining U. S. Marines at Tsingtao, the Truman Doctrine was called upon to justify greater military aid to the Nationalists. According to Worton's paper, the marines at Tsingtao had a political impact far beyond their actual physical numbers. Marine presence was a symbol of U. S. support to the anti-communist government of China. Further withdrawals in the face of such Soviet pressure would result in immense loss of prestige for the United States throughout the world, with the consequent fall of the Nationalists and the loss of the millions of people throughout Asia to the "slave labor" of Soviet inspired communism.<sup>23</sup> General Worton's views were indicative of many in the U. S. Navy.

The 9 June memorandum on China by the JCS mirrored the sentiments of General Worton, if a little less dramatically. The JCS blamed the Soviet Union for the successes of the Chinese communists and accused the CCP of being just another "Moscow-inspired"<sup>24</sup> communist party like all the rest in the world. The Nationalist government, according to the JCS was the only government in Asia that could resist the spread of Soviet communism. Failure to support that

government would result in Soviet take over. Accordingly the JCS recommended a new policy of "carefully planned, selective, and well supervised assistance"<sup>25</sup> to the Nationalist government and warned that if the Truman Doctrine was to be effective then it had to be "applied with consistency in all areas of the world threatened by Soviet expansion."<sup>26</sup> The military chiefs thought that only a relatively small amount of aid would successfully prop up the Nationalists whereas Marshall and many of his advisors in the State Department believed that only a major expenditure of American lives and fortune could save the present government of Chiang Kai-shek.

Throughout the month of June, navy leaders hailed the merits of the JCS memorandum. Fleet Admiral Nimitz spoke out in favor of greater aid to the Nationalists and had the Joint Strategic Plans Committee produce papers on the quick provision of arms and ammunition to the Nationalists and on bringing an end to marine withdrawals. Admiral Louis Denfeld, Commander of the U. S. Pacific Fleet and soon to be the next CNO, returned from a visit to China convinced that the KMT was disintegrating and that the Soviets were poised to move in after American troops withdrew. Greatly impressed by Denfeld's observations, Forrestal admonished Marshall that further withdrawals of U. S. Marines would contribute to the fall of the Nationalists. Accordingly, Forrestal advocated the supply of ammunition to the Nationalists, the speedy completion of the 271 ship program, the continuation of the naval training program at Tsingtao, and that action be taken on Chiang's desire to form an American-trained and equipped Chinese Marine Corps.<sup>27</sup>



State Department officials remained unconvinced by the JCS and Navy view. Vincent stated that the proposed increase in military aid would "prove inconclusive unless U. S. personnel took charge of operations and administration, lead inevitably to intervention in the civil war, provide an excuse for Soviet intervention, and arouse great opposition among the Chinese people."<sup>28</sup> At a meeting between the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, Marshall and Forrestal could reach no agreement concerning the provision of ammunition to the increasingly desperate U. S. armed Nationalist troops. Failure to provide such ammunition would be a clear aid to the communists but would definitely identify the United States as taking an indirect part in the Chinese Civil War. After much discussion the question was left to be decided by President Truman.<sup>29</sup>

Although Marshall disagreed with the JCS and navy's solution to the China problem, he did agree that the situation was critical and that perhaps a reexamination of the U. S. policy of strict neutrality, which Admiral Cooke characterized as "drift,"<sup>30</sup> was in order. Therefore Marshall recommended to Truman that General Albert C. Wedemeyer return to China on a fact-finding mission. Faced with the difficult decision of either risking Nationalist defeat or becoming even more deeply involved, Truman agreed that gathering more facts was a good idea. Accordingly, Wedemeyer left for China in early July for a two-month tour of China.

Wedemeyer was selected for the trip because of his previous experience in China and because his prestige and widely known pro-Nationalist opinion would lend greater credibility to his findings,

which Marshall fully expected to be that the salvation of the Nationalists would require vastly expanded American effort. While in China, Wedemeyer was bombarded by reports from Cooke and the U. S. Naval Attaché of the imminent Soviet threat and that warned of the dire consequences of failure to support the Nationalists despite the obvious difficulty in doing so.<sup>31</sup> The Nationalists clearly expected that Wedemeyer's mission was a prelude to renewed support from the United States. However, Wedemeyer was greatly discouraged by what he saw. His reports described inflation, corruption, defeatism, and apathy. KMT officials were "corruptly striving to obtain as much as they can before the collapse."<sup>32</sup> Nationalist soldiers "simply do not want to fight,"<sup>33</sup> whereas the communists showed "excellent spirit and fanatical fervor."<sup>34</sup> Addressing the members of the Chinese National Assembly prior to his departure at the end of August, Wedemeyer stated that the KMT needed to institute sweeping and far-reaching reforms if it expected to survive, advice the Nationalists apparently did not want to hear.

Shortly after Wedemeyer left China, relations between Admiral Cooke and the U. S. embassy at Nanking took a turn for the worse following the crash of a marine fighter-plane in communist-held territory one hundred miles northeast of Tsingtao. Quickly dispatching a cruiser and destroyer to the scene, Cooke ordered a landing party to go ashore without informing the U. S. embassy of his intention and despite the fact that the communists had evidenced obvious hostility by firing at and damaging a U. S. Navy patrol plane. After finding no sign of the pilot and determining that the fighter

wreckage had been booby-trapped, the reconnaissance party withdrew under heavy fire from communist forces. After several fruitless attempts, the U. S. Navy finally contacted responsible local communist officials and conducted negotiations for the release of the captured pilot. As the talks reached an impasse, Admiral Cooke personally flew to the scene, took charge of the negotiations, and finally secured the pilot's release at the price of \$1,000 in cash and some medical supplies for the communists.<sup>35</sup> Cooke's actions greatly perturbed Ambassador Stuart, who worried that the communists might attempt to use the incident as "proof" of active U. S. Navy interference in the civil war. The Ambassador was also upset by the consistent delay in receiving information on the situation. Kept virtually in the dark, the U. S. embassy had little choice but to allow Cooke to operate freely in the matter. However, Stuart expressed his concern by suggesting that the "Navy exert utmost care in avoiding further armed clashes with the communists."<sup>36</sup>

Significant action on the critical situation in China was somewhat hampered by organizational changes occurring in Washington following the implementation of the National Security Act of 1947, which unified the armed forces under a central Department of Defense. Among many changes under the new arrangement, James Forrestal became the new Secretary of Defense, while John L. Sullivan replaced him as the Secretary of the Navy, no longer a Cabinet post. With Forrestal as Secretary of Defense, the navy was assured of not losing its air arm to the newly independent air force or the marines to the army, fears that had preoccupied top naval leaders throughout 1946 and 1947.

Forrestal's great concern with China was shared by the new Secretary of the Navy, who was closely associated with members of Congress and the business community that were collectively coming to be known as the "China Lobby."<sup>37</sup> One of Sullivan's first acts of office was to remind Marshall that the navy still sought to implement P.L. 512 and to establish a formal Naval Advisory Group to China.<sup>38</sup>

Truman and Marshall were finding it increasingly difficult to ignore the growing clamor from many sources besides the navy to save Chiang Kai-shek, particularly pro-Nationalist members of Congress who threatened to scuttle Marshall Plan aid to Europe or refuse to support the establishment of a European defensive alliance unless something was done about China. Even General Wedemeyer's top secret final China report recommended that the United States had no choice but to support the "corrupt, reactionary, and inefficient Nationalists."<sup>39</sup>

Under the changing circumstances Marshall took a more favorable view of the negotiations between the United States and China concerning the transfer of surplus naval vessels to China, which had been allowed to bog down over Chinese desire to ensure that supplies of ammunition for the vessels would be forthcoming and U. S. desire not to have such a guarantee appear in print. Following a meeting with Forrestal in early November, Marshall agreed that the United States should supply surplus ammunition as a "maintenance" item, but that such ammunition would not be included at the time of transfer and that pledges of future supply be issued to the Chinese secretly and orally.<sup>40</sup> After another month of negotiation the Chinese agreed.

On 8 December 1947, the agreement to transfer surplus naval vessels to China was signed by the United States and the Republic of China. Under the terms of the agreement, ninety-six vessels, including two destroyer-escorts that had been on lend-lease to China since World War Two, were officially given to the Nationalists, and the transfer of a further two hundred and seventy-one vessels, including four more destroyer-escorts, commenced as soon as the Chinese were capable of manning and operating them.<sup>41</sup>

As the year 1947 drew to a close, Admiral Cooke neared the new mandatory retirement age of sixty-two and indicated his desire to retire. Cooke's tenure as Commander of the Seventh Fleet, later Naval Forces West Pacific (NAVFORWESPAC) following a navy reorganization in mid-1947, had not been particularly happy. Cooke experienced continual frustration in his attempts to have his programs for China adopted as U. S. policy, suffered reprimands from Nimitz for some of his public statements, earned the distrust of U. S. embassy officials, which was mutual, and had his character falsely impugned by press reports. Despite this, Cooke left China with regret. Convinced that the salvation of China from the Soviet threat was vital to the security interests of the United States, Cooke's involvement in the China problem continued well after his relief by Vice Admiral Oscar C. Badger, in early 1948.

## U. S. NAVAL OPERATIONS IN CHINA: FEBRUARY 1948 - JUNE 1949

American naval forces in the Far East at the beginning of 1948 were a far cry from the mighty Seventh Fleet that entered Chinese waters following the defeat of Japan. Usually composed of two cruisers, eight destroyers, numerous support vessels, and occasionally a visiting Pacific Fleet carrier, Naval Forces West Pacific (NAVFORWESPAC) operated from Tsingtao, the finest natural harbor in northeastern China and also the location of the American-run Chinese Naval Training Center, which had to that time provided instruction to over 300 Chinese officers and 2,300 enlisted men. The training center and limited U. S. naval facilities were guarded by 3,600 marines, designated Fleet Marine Force West Pacific (FMFWESPAC), following the final withdrawal of other remnants of the III Amphibious Corps from the Tientsin-Peiping area in September 1947.

Severely hampered by the manpower shortages and lack of funds, spare parts, and supplies that plagued the postwar American military, U. S. naval and marine units in China continually struggled to maintain some semblance of combat readiness. In the event of war with the Soviet Union, the American forces at Tsingtao would in all probability be forced to evacuate and according to prevailing Pacific War plans would then be used to hold Japan while major U. S. naval units shifted to the more vital theaters of operation in the Mid-East and Western Europe.<sup>1</sup> Although American naval forces in China were not assigned a vitally important wartime function, many naval leaders believed that NAVFORWESPAC played a crucial peacetime role in preventing

the spread of communist influence in Asia and therefore deserved considerably more attention and support than it had been receiving.<sup>2</sup> One of these officers was NAVFORWESPAC's new commander, Vice Admiral Oscar C. Badger.

A Medal of Honor winner at Vera Cruz in 1914 and son of a former rear admiral, Badger possessed an outstanding former service record and an intense determination to succeed at his new assignment. Energetic, eternally optimistic, but often jealous of his personal power, Badger acquired the perception during briefings with top U. S. Government and naval leaders that America's policy was to stop the spread of communism by all means short of war.<sup>3</sup> Firm in his conviction that the Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek represented the only practical means of combating Soviet inspired communism, Badger forwarded all Nationalist requests for aid with his enthusiastic recommendation, rapidly endearing himself to the KMT leadership. During his first seven months in China, Badger made 128 flights between Tsingtao and the Nationalist capital at Nanking.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly after his February arrival in China, Vice Admiral Badger recommended the consolidation of NAVFORWESPAC and Naval Forces Far East (NAVFORFE), a similar fleet of cruisers and destroyers supporting MacArthur's occupation troops in Japan, on the sound military grounds that since present strategic directives called for the two forces to operate together in the event of war, then it made good sense for them to cruise and train together during peacetime. Badger claimed that jealousy and an unhealthy competitive spirit in both fleets, and undue army influence in NAVFORE adversely affected the ability of

the U. S. Navy to perform its missions in Asia.<sup>5</sup>

Badger additionally recommended that he, the commander of NAVFORWESPAC and senior American military representative in China, should be given an extra star to promote U. S. Navy prestige. Badger states that his rank of vice admiral subjected him to "situations of embarrassment and even humiliation"<sup>6</sup> in dealing with the protocol conscious Nationalist leadership and "undoubtedly affects my free access to Chiang Kai-shek which Cooke, (a full admiral) enjoyed."<sup>7</sup>

Although Badger's proposals received the strong backing of the new Pacific Fleet Commander, Admiral D. C. "Duke" Ramsey, Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Louis Denfeld reluctantly turned both down. Although clearly supportive of Badger's ideas, Denfeld was unwilling to take action on any recommendations likely to aggravate the already existing bitter interservice disputes over force sizes, structure, and strategy that occurred as each service fought for its share of the drastically reduced, anti-inflation inspired Defense budget.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to President Truman's desire to hold back inflation during an election year by cutting defense spending, the vast sums of money being expended on foreign assistance programs, such as Marshall Plan aid to Europe severely limited the amount of funds that could be appropriated to the military. The lack of financial support along with militarily unpopular, particularly in the navy, plans for greater unification of the Nation's armed forces fueled the intense competition between the services. Ironically, one such foreign aid program was Truman's proposed 550 million dollar aid package to China. Although convinced that such money was going to a losing cause, Truman was



reacting to charges from the Republican dominated Congress that he was "soft on communism" in Asia. Although far less than the one and a half billion dollars in aid recommended by some opponents of the Administration's China policy, Truman hoped the assistance package would be enough to mollify his critics while not so much that it might hurt the United States should it be lost or wasted by Chiang. During Congressional hearings on the matter, retired Admiral Cooke testified in favor of including military assistance in the proposed aid program. As finally passed by Congress and signed by Truman on 4 April 1948, the China Aid Act contained \$338 million in economic assistance and a 125 million dollar special grant to be used by the Nationalists as they saw fit, which everyone knew would be militarily.

Even while the United States debated the merits of aid to Chiang, the outlook for the Nationalists became increasingly bleak. Ever more powerful communist forces roamed the countryside at will, trapping overextended and demoralized KMT troops behind the perceived safety of ancient city walls throughout north China and Manchuria. The strategic initiative had passed to the forces of Mao Tse-tung and one by one the Nationalist strongholds began to fall, often accompanied by mass defections of KMT soldiers. In the cities, raging inflation and inept government management destroyed a formerly strong base of Nationalist support; the urban middle and working classes. Despite giving lip service to the need for unity and reform, the KMT continued to be dominated by reactionary cliques seeking to retain their privileged status and further their own personal ambitions. Prizing fealty to himself above all, Chiang turned a blind eye to the

incompetence and corruptions of officials who professed loyalty to him. Increasing numbers of Chinese began to feel that peace under the communists could not be any worse than the present state of affairs under the Nationalists.<sup>9</sup>

The future of the U. S. Navy in China became questionable in April when the communists captured the city of Weishan following an extremely bloody battle and severed the only rail link between Tsingtao and the rest of China. Victorious communist troops now faced the inadequate, second-rate Nationalist troops assigned to protect Tsingtao due to Chiang's gamble that the United States would defend the important port for him. Faced with the possibility of a communist attack in the near future, Badger appealed to Washington for instructions. In a cable to Admiral Denfeld on 3 May, Badger stated that there were four alternatives available should Tsingtao be assaulted. According to Badger, the U. S. Navy could either help the Nationalists defend the city, protect only installations vital to U. S. interests, evacuate as a communist attack developed, or withdraw from Tsingtao well before a communist threat became imminent. Badger ruled out the second alternative as militarily unsound. Badger claimed that to evacuate under pressure would lay the U. S. Navy open to charges of deserting a loyal ally in time of greatest need and that early withdrawal would demonstrate lack of faith in the Nationalist's ability to survive and practically invite the communists to take over Tsingtao. Badger further said that withdrawal from Tsingtao would irreparably damage U. S. prestige in the Orient. Accordingly, Badger recommended that the U. S. Navy prepare to aid

the Nationalists in defense of the city and asked for pledges of prompt reinforcement for marine air and ground units in such an eventuality.<sup>10</sup>

In Washington, Admiral Denfeld accepted Badger's conclusions after an intelligence report confirmed that the Nationalists could not successfully defend Tsingtao on their own if the communists chose to attack.<sup>11</sup> At the urging of Denfeld, the rest of the JCS agreed to grant Badger permission to begin planning for the defense of the port in conjunction with the Nationalists while the matter was taken up with Forrestal and Marshall.<sup>12</sup>

The JCS action caused an uproar in State Department circles. Acting Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett immediately requested that the JCS countermand Badger's instructions. Denfeld reluctantly ordered Badger not to engage in any advance combined planning with the Chinese while the subject was further argued in Washington,<sup>13</sup> a directive that shocked and confused Badger who had already been to see Chiang to discuss the Tsingtao problem.<sup>14</sup> During following meetings of the National Security Council and between Military and State Department officials it became apparent that Marshall had no intention of "getting sucked in"<sup>15</sup> to the Chinese Civil War although he was by no means anxious to see the communists win. Marshall agreed with the navy position that early withdrawal would be seriously detrimental to already sagging Nationalist morale but was unwilling to run the risk of becoming involved in open conflict with the communist Chinese while American forces were already inadequate for their assigned strategic tasks. In addition, Marshall felt that the communists

would not attack Tsingtao while American forces were present. Thus, at Marshall's insistence, the JCS informed Badger on 14 June that the defense of Tsingtao was the sole responsibility of the Nationalists and that he was to proceed with plans to evacuate the city should a communist attack appear imminent.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the decision of Marshall and the JCS, Admiral Denfeld refused to let the matter drop. Throughout the months of June and into July, navy strategic planners produced position papers on the need to retain naval forces at Tsingtao in order to aid Denfeld in discussions with other government and military officials. Although the Navy Division of Strategic Plans concluded that "Tsingtao is of negligible military importance"<sup>17</sup> in the context of a general war, a paper produced by the newly created Central Intelligence Agency, then under the direction of Rear Admiral Hillenkoeter, recognized the symbolic importance of Tsingtao and stated that if the U. S. Navy withdrew then "Soviet and communist propaganda would herald it as a U. S. strategic retreat reflecting U. S. judgment that the force of communist expansion in Asia was irresistible and popular opinion throughout the Far East and the world would accept this interpretation."<sup>18</sup> Armed with the argument that Tsingtao represented a signal of America's determination and ability to resist the spread of communism, Denfeld managed to keep the subject alive until the Soviet blockade of Berlin occupied virtually all the energy and attention of top American policymakers.

While Admiral Denfeld lobbied for continued American naval presence in Tsingtao, the U. S. Navy in China continued its traditional

inability to get along with the American Embassy. The new head of the Prospective Naval Advisory Group, Rear Admiral Raymond Thurber, quickly irritated Ambassador Stuart with his vociferous partisanship of the KMT cause and annoyed Badger by allowing his advice to the Nationalists to stray beyond training and organizational matters and into the field of operations, a prerogative that Badger reserved solely to himself. At Stuart's insistence, Badger issued several pointed directives and ultimately a reprimand to Thurber.<sup>19</sup> Not easily silenced, however, Thurber voiced his judgment that the United States should give "unlimited military advice and staff assistance to the Chinese Armed Forces"<sup>20</sup> due to the critical Nationalists predicament in north China and Manchuria. Because Thurber seemed unable to maintain harmonious relations with the U. S. embassy, Badger finally reluctantly recommended the early relief of the outspoken officer.

Despite personal differences, Badger did not disagree with Thurber's sentiments. In fact even the U. S. embassy and the army concurred that the Nationalists were now in desperate shape and needed prompt application of the economic and military assistance granted by the China Aid Act of 1948 if they expected to retain enough strength to bargain effectively with the communists should negotiations once be brought about. The head of the Prospective Army Advisory Group and director of the Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) scheduled to become activated later in the fall, Major General David Barr, blamed the Nationalists's difficulties on a "lack of aggressiveness and offensive spirit"<sup>21</sup> among KMT troops. Ambassador Stuart took Barr's observation one step further

and attributed the malaise to the fact that growing numbers of Chinese did not consider the government of Chiang Kai-shek worth fighting for, something increased military aid could not possibly correct and might even aggravate.<sup>22</sup> Badger, however, felt that Chiang's troubles stemmed from the absence of an overall workable strategic plan and shortages of arms and ammunition.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout the spring of 1948 Badger vainly attempted to convince Chiang of the vital necessity to supply much-needed military equipment to General Fu Tso-yi, then ably but tenuously holding the key Hopei Province region of north China. Unusual for a Nationalist general, the cunning Fu enjoyed the confidence and loyalty of his well-trained troops and the local civilian population. Unfortunately Fu was not a member of the favored clique of generals who continually reaffirmed their allegiance to Chiang. Thus Fu received virtually no assistance from the Nationalist government despite the fact that he defended the most militarily important area of China. Badger contended that a relatively small amount of aid would enable Fu to shift to the offensive and secure the region between Peiping and the sea, thus preventing the communists from reinforcing their units to the south in Shantung Province and also enabling the Nationalists to mount relief expeditions to the beleaguered garrisons trapped in Manchuria. Although both Stuart and Barr agreed with Badger that this was the area where a limited amount of aid would serve the Nationalist cause best, Chiang stubbornly refused to support Fu and opted to use the 125 million dollar special aid grant on more favored generals and on his prestigious but virtually ineffective Air Force.

In July 1948, with the Nationalist position still worsening, the Chinese Vice-Minister of National Defense, Lieutenant General Cheng Kai-minh, met with Badger and indicated that Chiang had finally decided to support operations in the Hopei Province area, on conditions that the United States provide the necessary arms and ammunition and that the Nationalists not have to pay for them from the 125 million dollar special grant. Cheng suggested that Fu could barter some unspecified raw materials from this area in exchange for American aid. In addition Cheng stated that Chiang also had come to agree with Badger that the armies of Fu Tso-yi should receive top priority, a somewhat contradictory statement given Chiang's unwillingness to pay for them with the funds the United States was then providing.<sup>24</sup>

Greatly heartened by this Chinese response, Badger immediately asked Denfeld to initiate action to ensure the urgent delivery of the required military supplies from American surplus stores. Convinced that stabilizing the Hopei Province area was the only way to prevent the spread of communist influence to the south, Badger made his recommendations in full knowledge of directives that stated surplus stocks were "not available except on the basis of a sacrifice in the interest of the very highest priority national policy"<sup>25</sup> Badger also asked Ambassador Stuart to expedite arrangements for the provision of the requested military aid.

Badger's new optimism quickly faded as Ambassador Stuart flatly stated that any military assistance would have to be funded through the China Aid Act special grant.<sup>26</sup> Admiral Denfeld informed Badger that no action could be taken until the Nationalists made a formal

request for additional military aid through the appropriate State Department channels although the navy would be prepared to support such a request if asked for an opinion by the State Department.<sup>27</sup> When Chiang realized that aid to Fu Tso-yi would in fact have to be paid from the 125 million dollar grant, he promptly changed his mind and once again placed Fu on a low priority. Shocked by Chiang's capricious turnabout, Badger told Stuart that "the U. S. must support anti-communist control of north China regardless of government changes."<sup>28</sup> Although inclined to agree with Badger in this case, Stuart replied that the United States could not pressure Chiang into allocating specific funds for particular purposes without jeopardizing America's purported neutral stand in the civil war.<sup>29</sup>

In the weeks that followed, top ranking KMT officials continued to meet with Badger hoping that he would use his influence to acquire supplies for them outside of normal diplomatic channels.<sup>30</sup> Although Badger was most sympathetic, which the Nationalists already counted on, he remained conscious of his orders not to commit the United States to any course of action which affected America's policy of neutrality without permission from Ambassador Stuart. Badger dutifully kept Stuart informed of the Nationalist efforts to end run the U. S. embassy. After excessive delay, the Nationalists finally resigned themselves to working through Ambassador Stuart and submitted their official request for military aid in mid-August.

Responding to the Nationalist actions, Admiral Denfeld placed Badger's proposal for special aid to north China before the Joint Chiefs of Staff. With the strong support of Denfeld and Leahy, the



JCS judged Badger's aid plan militarily sound and recommended that Secretary of Defense Forrestal take the matter up with the National Security Council and with President Truman.<sup>31</sup>

Although the continuing Berlin Crisis, the Palestinian War, and the upcoming presidential election occupied top American policy makers throughout the late summer of 1948, Forrestal managed to have Badger's plan, along with the overall question of military assistance to Chiang Kai-shek, discussed at high level meetings. Although the State Department had long resisted supplying war material to the Nationalists, it was apparent to all that unless something was done the Nationalists would collapse much sooner than anyone had previously anticipated.

During these discussions the State Department was still less than enthusiastic about giving military aid to the KMT, but such assistance seemed the only way to buy Chiang a little more time in which to reach some sort of peaceful settlement with the communists, should either side ever again opt for negotiations. Politically vulnerable, President Truman was also reluctantly inclined to favor military aid in order to answer damaging Republican charges that he was allowing the KMT to fall. Accordingly, Truman accepted the recommendation of Forrestal and the JCS to provide military equipment to the Nationalists, although this action appeared to many to discredit America's neutral stance.

Following Presidential approval of the military aid program, the Washington military and State Department bureaucracies ponderously began a lengthy process of checking for the availability of

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scarce surplus stocks, complicated by continually changing Nationalist requests. During the confusion which seemed to characterize the entire operation, the Chinese finally included in their request some supplies due to be sent to Fu Tso-yi. By late September no military equipment had been shipped despite Badger's urgent pleas that it might be too late.<sup>32</sup> In fact, it was too late. The Nationalist debacle had already begun.

On 23 September 1948, communist forces captured the large city of Tsinan, severing the rail link between Fu Tso-yi's armies in Hopei Province and the rest of the Nationalist-held China. Several days later, the dire warnings of Marshall and Wedemeyer to Chiang came true as the isolated and demoralized Nationalist garrisons at Changchun and Mukden fell, leaving all Manchuria in communist hands and freeing hundreds of thousands of communist troops for an overwhelming and decisive drive to the south. Throughout October and into November, Mao's troops achieved one victory after another, often aided by mass defections of Nationalist units.

In mid-November the long awaited American military aid began to arrive aboard U. S. naval transports. A former American LST of the Chinese Navy succeeded in reaching the port of Taku and off-loaded arms and ammunition for Fu Tso-yi's armies, still heroically holding out against great odds. To Fu's horror, the quantities of supplies were far less than anticipated and needed. There were no spare parts, and vital items such as clips for ammunition or tripods for machine guns were missing.<sup>33</sup> Demoralized after receiving virtually useless equipment, Fu's fine armies began to crumble. After some "face-saving"

gestures, Fu shortly thereafter cast his lot with the winning side and became a communist.

With the precipitous collapse of the Nationalist war effort, the United States began the process of evacuating unessential military personnel, dependents, and civilians. Although evacuation plans had been prepared in the early summer, the United States had kept them a close secret for fear of hurting Nationalist morale. There was no need for secrecy now. One day prior to the much anticipated formal establishment of a Joint United States Military Advisory Group, JUSMAG, Major General Barr ordered the evacuation of JUSMAG dependents via ships of NAVFORWESPAC. Within a week after the naval component of JUSMAG finally became official, its commander, Rear Admiral Francis P. Old, began suspending most of the Naval Advisory Group's operations.

On 5 November, Ambassador Stuart issued a formal warning for all American nationals to evacuate the Chinese mainland while normal transportation was still available. Five days later, at Stuart's request Badger dispatched a destroyer-transport with a platoon of marines to protect the American embassy at Nanking while all anxiously awaited the outcome of the Nationalists' last attempt to stem the communist tide in the great battle of Hsuehchow. While Nationalist troops desperately and valiantly held off the initial communist assaults, Chiang relieved the able Nationalist commander and replaced him with one more personally loyal to Chiang, but unfortunately also incompetent. The battle ended in utter defeat. Although remnants of Fu's forces would hold Peiping into 1949 before defecting, the

communists had achieved virtually undisputed control of China north of the Yangtze River, all except the isolated port of Tsingtao.

The disastrous defeats suffered by the Nationalists in the fall of 1948 prompted renewed discussions in Washington about the value and risks of maintaining U. S. naval forces at Tsingtao. Convinced that retention of Tsingtao was vital to American prestige and security interests throughout the Far East, Vice Admiral Badger had recommended in early October that marines at Tsingtao should be reinforced and that the United States should announce that it intended to continue use of Tsingtao as a base of operations despite the course of the civil war.<sup>34</sup> Badger's second recommendation elicited a quick rejection from Acting Secretary of State Lovett, who had long favored withdrawal from Tsingtao.<sup>35</sup> After fruitless discussions between Forrestal and Lovett the question was left up to President Truman to decide. With the November elections only a fortnight away, Truman decided that the U. S. Navy should not yet quit Tsingtao. Despite the continued reservations of Stuart and Lovett, Forrestal authorized Badger on 22 October to "use his forces for the protection of U. S. interests and maintenance of order within the perimeter of Tsingtao."<sup>36</sup>

Badger never had the chance to utilize his new authority because on 2 November a special meeting of the National Security Council decided that Badger should begin to evacuate dependents and close down shore facilities at Tsingtao. However, Badger was informed that Tsingtao would be temporarily reinforced in order to cover American intentions to withdraw. In addition, Badger was instructed not to conduct any negotiations with rapidly advancing communist

forces.<sup>37</sup> The major problem confronting American policy makers was how to withdraw from Tsingtao without having it appear that the United States was abandoning the desperate Nationalists in the face of overwhelming communist pressure, which however was the truth. Throughout November the United States stalled making any unpleasant announcement of its intentions until Chiang Kai-shek unwarily solved the dilemma by issuing orders to move the Chinese naval training center from Tsingtao to the island of Formosa, thus removing the most visible rationale for continued U. S. naval presence at Tsingtao. With the Chinese Navy departing the port, the U. S. Navy had a fortuitous excuse for bringing its activities at Tsingtao to an absolute minimum, albeit reluctantly.<sup>38</sup>

The announced movement of the Chinese naval training center brought up the question of whether or not the United States should keep the island of Formosa from falling under communist control in the likely event of the complete collapse of Chiang's government. Anticipating the problem in mid-November, Lovett requested the views of the JCS on the strategic importance of Formosa. The JCS replied that the loss of Formosa to any group susceptible to Kremlin domination would be "seriously unfavorable"<sup>39</sup> to America's security interest and recommended the "application of such diplomatic and economic steps as may be appropriate to insure a Formosan administration friendly to the United States."<sup>40</sup> Conscious of the inadequacy of U. S. forces assigned to discharge already existing commitments, the JCS deliberately did not mention any use of military force to retain Formosa. However, the combined JCS opinion did not completely correspond with navy views.

Although resigned to the fact that Tsingtao would probably have to be abandoned, Badger remained convinced that the U. S. Navy remained an important stabilizing force and that complete withdrawal of the navy would lead to widespread destruction of American and foreign lives and property. Badger, therefore, advocated the continuation of U. S. naval privileges in south China and Formosa.<sup>41</sup> In Washington, navy leaders formulated Badger's recommendations into a proposal for preventing the loss of Formosa to the communists. Pushed by Forrestal and Secretary of the Navy Sullivan at a meeting of the National Security Council on 5 January 1949, the navy plan called for Badger's forces to follow the move of the Chinese Naval Training Center to Formosa. When the widely anticipated fall of Chiang occurred, the U. S. Navy would be in a position to protect Formosa from communist assault, while a plebescite was conducted under United Nations auspices. The navy assumed that a free election would result in an independent Formosa friendly to American interests.<sup>42</sup>

The navy plan met considerable opposition from the new Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who had replaced the aging General Marshall. Acheson shared Marshall's belief that the best course of action was to avoid becoming further entangled in the Chinese Civil War. Although Truman quickly approved Acheson's rejection of the navy's plan to establish a military foothold on Formosa, Acheson nevertheless went ahead and requested the views of the JCS on the Formosa problem. On 10 February, the JCS reaffirmed their position to rely on diplomatic and economic measures to protect Formosa. However, at the insistence of Admiral Denfeld, the JCS recommended maintaining a naval presence

consisting of a few fleet units stationed at Formosan ports, although the United States should make no commitment to use military force in the event of a communist attack.<sup>43</sup> While the JCS proposal was being discussed in Washington, Vice Admiral Badger, in his flagship El Dorado, visited the Formosan ports of Takao and Keelung, leaving only after Acheson formally objected to the JCS plan. On 5 March, Admiral Denfeld informed Badger that U. S. naval forces were "not to be stationed at or off Formosan ports in support of political and economic measures."<sup>44</sup>

While naval leaders in Washington sought to establish naval influence in Formosa, other naval operations on the mainland were being deactivated. In January and February, Naval Advisory Group activities in the cities of Canton, Nanking, and Shanghai were suspended and virtually all U. S. naval personnel and dependents evacuated. Despite pleas from the mayor of Tsingtao that Badger do everything on his part to hold Tsingtao "by all means,"<sup>45</sup> FMFWESPAC redeployed aboard ship or to Guam and Japan. Although nearly all shore based naval units went afloat, American warships continued to ride at anchor in Tsingtao harbor for the time being.

American evacuation operations proceeded in orderly fashion while the communists regrouped their forces and consolidated their gains in north China. During the lull, Chiang Kai-shek, under great pressure from many elements of the KMT, resigned the presidency in favor of Vice-President Li Tsung-jen, who immediately attempted to negotiate a last-ditch settlement with the communists. Li hoped the communists would agree to a peaceful formation of a coalition government.



However, with victory theirs for the taking, the communists were no longer interested in negotiation. Li's bargaining position was further undermined as Chiang, despite not having any official capacity, continued to issue orders to the Nationalist armies. Chiang made no attempt to use the formidable natural barrier of the Yangtze River as a defensive position to halt the southward communist assault. Instead, Chiang ordered the most loyal units to withdraw southward, leaving the Nationalist capital at Nanking defenseless, and to prepare to proceed to Formosa, a strategy which even the ardent supporter of Chiang, General Ho Ying-chin, described as a "stupidly disastrous course."<sup>46</sup>

While American naval assistance activities wound down in February 1949, a smaller but parallel British effort that had been a constant source of irritation to U. S. naval officers attempting to train the Chinese Navy came to an even more ignominious end when the Nationalist cruiser Chungking, the ex-British Aurora, defected to the communists. The Chungking was the largest ship in the Chinese Navy and her crew had spent well over a year training in Great Britain, an activity which Murray, Cooke, and Badger believed drew some of the best Chinese candidates away from the U. S. training program at Tsingtao.<sup>47</sup> Although Chiang never viewed the British Navy as favorably as that of the United States, the offer of a prestigious cruiser had been too much for him to pass up.

Following the Chungking's defection and disappearance on 25 February 1949, Admiral Kwei Yung-chin, commander of the Chinese Nationalist Navy and a close friend of Badger, asked the American

admiral to help search for the ship. Although sympathetic, Badger declined and replied that "forces of this command (NAVFORWESPAC) cannot participate in fratricidal war."<sup>48</sup> Two weeks later Kwei again appealed for help from the U. S. Navy to destroy the renegade cruiser and was again refused by Badger.<sup>49</sup> Finally in mid-March repeated attempts by Nationalist bombers to sink the Chungking at Hulutao succeeded.

While the Nationalist Air Force basked in a brief moment of glory the communists prepared to cross the Yangtze and take Nanking. Because the U. S. embassy staff, including military attachés, intended to remain in the city, Stuart believed that an American vessel should be dispatched to Nanking to ensure the safety of U. S. lives and property. Receiving a report from the Naval Attaché, Captain Samuel B. Frankel, that communist artillery now commanded the river approaches to Nanking and that the capture of the city would probably occur with violence, Badger canceled the departure of the U.S.S. Diachenko.<sup>50</sup> The British, however, chose to dispatch the HMS Amethyst to protect the Crown's interests. In their answer to a century of foreign domination of the waterways of China, communist gunners riddled the Amethyst and seriously mauled the British cruiser London, and two other ships sent to the rescue. Only after heroic efforts were the British ships able to return downstream, bringing forty dead and eighty wounded.<sup>51</sup>

Badger's decision not to send the Diachenko to Nanking undoubtedly prevented American involvement in an incident similar to that suffered by the British and was hailed

by the State Department as a "masterful handling of the problem."<sup>52</sup> Ironically, several weeks previous to this, a report that Badger intended to publicly blast American aid policy to China prompted Denfeld to inform Badger that his actions had "again caused us considerable embarrassment with the State Department and undoubtedly do not work out to either the best interests of the navy or to your best interests."<sup>53</sup> Although the victim of a misunderstanding in this case, Badger had been reprimanded a number of times for making public statements regarding political rather than military matters. Throughout the early months of 1949, relations between the navy and the State Department in China, and even more so in Washington, continued to be as distrustful and confused as always.

As the communists renewed their offensive in the spring of 1949, the ability of the U. S. Navy to influence the formulation of America's China policy took a turn for the worse. In March 1949, 73 year old Fleet Admiral Leahy retired, bitterly disappointed by America's failure to prevent the loss of China to the communists. That same month, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal broke down under the intense pressure of running the American defense establishment and resigned for health reasons, committing suicide several months later. Forrestal's replacement, Louis Johnson, was primarily concerned with cutting costs rather than advocating any increased navy commitments in China. Later that spring, Secretary of the Navy John L. Sullivan, also an ardent supporter of Chiang, resigned in protest over Johnson's arbitrary cancellation of the navy's coveted new supercarrier. Sullivan was replaced by Francis P. "Rowboat"

Mathews, who had little knowledge of or interest in the navy. Denfeld, who had consistently supported Badger's recommendations, found little time to be concerned with China during the bitter inter-service battles over unification and strategy taking place in the spring and summer of 1949 which ultimately resulted in his dismissal by Mathews.

While the strongly pro-Nationalist faction disappeared from the top echelons of the U. S. Navy, communist armies neared the great seaports of Shanghai and Tsingtao. In early May 1949, Badger made one last unsuccessful attempt to convince Ambassador Stuart that U. S. naval forces should remain at Tsingtao. Stuart and the State Department still disagreed. Thus on 19 May, all American naval vessels sailed from Tsingtao for south China, leaving only a token force at anchor, which departed as the communists mounted an assault upon the city several days later. With no hope of help from the U. S. Navy, the Nationalist garrison of Tsingtao surrendered without a fight on 2 June 1949. American naval leaders had long believed that the presence of U. S. naval power had been the primary deterrent to any earlier communist attack upon Tsingtao. However, Chou En-lai, the second ranking communist official, expressed a different opinion. Chou claimed that Tsingtao was the most important port in the communist cause because much of the military aid which passed through the port destined for the Nationalists ultimately, and at no expense, fell into communist hands. Said Chou, "Tsingtao is the last place we will close down."<sup>54</sup> Regardless, the fall of Tsingtao was for all practical purposes the end of ninety-five years of U. S. naval involvement in the affairs of mainland China.

## THE U. S. NAVY AND THE ISSUE OF FORMOSA

NAVFORWESPAC was dissolved upon the detachment of Badger on 28 August 1949 and was succeeded by the Seventh Task Fleet, operating out of the Philippines and Japan, and commanded by Vice Admiral Russel S. Berkey. Hopeful to the last, Badger had just completed recommendations to aid various Moslem tribesman in Inner Mongolia and old warlords in South China whom he believed might be able to continue the struggle against Communism if they had some U. S. assistance. However, due to the overwhelming Communist triumphs on the mainland these proposals met little enthusiasm. Following his relief, Badger returned to the United States, worked for a while as a China expert in the office of the CNO, and testified before Congressional hearings on aid to China. Badger's outspoken advocacy of military aid to the Nationalists was partly responsible for the passage of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949 which included 75 million dollars to be used at the Presidents discretion in "the general area of China." For the remainder of his Naval career and afterwards, Badger rarely missed an opportunity to express his conviction that the United States should give its full support to the Nationalist Government on Formosa.

Throughout 1949, the Truman Administration remained resolved not to intervene in the Chinese Civil War and thus refused to commit the United States to the defense of Formosa, which by the beginning of 1950 had become the only important remaining Nationalist hold-out, despite vehement opposition to this policy from members of Congress and the business community, who were collectively known as the "China Lobby." Members of this group, along with representatives of

the Nationalist government in the United States avidly sought the support of senior American Army and Navy officers, but met only mixed success in their efforts. Although invited to join the newly created organization. To Defend America by Aiding Anti-Communist China, Admiral Barbey declined, stating that it was too late and that "military measures won't work against Asiatic Communism unless accompanied by political, economic, and social reforms"<sup>1</sup> General Wedemeyer reportedly turned down an offer of five million dollars from the Chinese Nationalist Government if he would resign from the U. S. Army and work as a military consultant to Chiang Kai-shek. Wedemeyer refused because this action would be contrary to U. S. Policy and stated that "if the Nationalists have such a large sum of money, the it should be used for the welfare of the people in order to enhance the forces against the Communists."<sup>2</sup> Despite these setbacks, the China Lobby nevertheless had an outspoken ally in the person of Admiral Charles M. Cooke, retired.

Since his retirement in March 1948, Cooke had lectured widely on the need to support Chiang and had tirelessly lobbied Republican members of Congress who also opposed Truman's neutral China policy. Cooke's testimony was an important factor in the inclusion of military aid in the China Aid Act of 1948. Cooke's efforts particularly bore fruit when Senators Taft, Knowland, and Smith urged in November 1949, that the U. S. Seventh Fleet should be used to protest Formosa from Communist invasion.<sup>3</sup> However, Truman and Marshall believed that Formosa would soon fall regardless of any U. S. attempts to save it and therefore refused to alter their position. Cooke had also been working arduously but unsuccessfully to gain necessary Presidential approval

for a group of retired U. S. officers to be hired by the Nationalist Government as military advisors. Chiang wanted such a mission and hoped that the unofficial arrangement might quickly lead to the establishment of an official American military advisory group on Formosa, something that neither Truman nor Acheson was inclined to have happen.

Convinced that "I could not continue to live with myself if I sat still and did nothing",<sup>4</sup> Cooke took a job as a correspondent for the International News Service and returned to Formosa early in 1950. Shortly, thereafter, Cooke discovered a way to circumvent Presidential authority and become an employee of an American company, Commerce International-China, that had been contracted by the Nationalist government to be its official purchasing and sale agent. Within several weeks, sixteen more retired U. S. officers were hired by Commerce International China and were known as the American Technical and Military Advisory Group.<sup>5</sup> Throughout 1950, Cooke advised Chiang Kai-shek on all aspects of Chinese military operations, including organization, training and strategy.

In early 1950, Cooke sought to convince both General MacArthur, still Supreme Commander Allied Powers in Japan, and the new Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, that the defense of Formosa and complete support of Chiang Kai-shek were vital to American security interests. Thus Cooke made several trips to Tokyo to confer with MacArthur and wrote long letters to Sherman concerning the number of Soviet troops and aircraft that were entering China under the terms of an alliance agreement between Mao and Stalin reached in the fall of 1949. Cooke met some success with MacArthur, who had

long considered Formosa of great strategic significance, but who continued to advocate the use of diplomatic and economic measures, rather than military, to prevent its loss to the Communists. Cooke had even less luck with Sherman, although the CNO also believed that Formosa was important to American security interests.

The energetic Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, who had been Chief of Staff to Nimitz in the later stages of the Pacific War and had been the first commander of U. S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, was firmly convinced that Europe and the Middle East were far more important to American security interests than the Far East. Although Sherman would have liked very much to keep Formosa from falling into Communist hands, he believed that the U. S. Navy could not commit the necessary resources to the Western Pacific and still have adequate forces to meet strategic requirements in European waters. Although forced to respond negatively to requests by his commanders in the Pacific for more ships and men, Sherman sought to solve the problem by advocating a Naval expansion program. Sherman's plans received favorable consideration by Truman and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, because of the detonation of an atomic bomb by the Soviets, which jolted the United States out of its military complacency, and because of a proposal by Sherman to use U. S. Naval forces to apply pressure on the Chinese Communists to release interned Americans. Although the details of the plan are still unavailable, Truman and Johnson were impressed enough to approve U. S. Naval expansion.<sup>6</sup> As a result, during early 1950 a carrier began to operate for an extended period in the Western Pacific for the first time since the end of World War II. Despite greater



American Naval presence in the Far East, Sherman remained convinced that Formosa "could probably be written off in the next sixth months,"<sup>7</sup> and refused to strongly support Cooke's proposals for military aid to Chiang.

During the late spring of 1950 support for increased aid to Chiang Kai-shek was brewing within the State Department itself and was advocated by the new director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, Dean Rusk. In addition key figures such as MacArthur, Johnson, General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the JCS, and even Sherman were beginning to advocate military aid to Chiang Kai-shek, when North Korean forces shattered South Korean lines in a surprise attack on 25 June 1950. Responding to Communist aggression, in Korea and seeking to prevent widening of hostilities, President Truman on 27 June 1950 ordered "the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa. As a corollary of this action I am calling upon the Chinese Government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland. The Seventh Fleet will see that this is done."<sup>8</sup> The neutral intent of this action was reaffirmed throughout the summer and fall of 1950, despite attempts by Chiang Kai-shek, Cooke, and MacArthur to interpret Truman's statement as really implying support to the Nationalists. Thus, despite the efforts of U. S. Naval leaders since the end of World War II to steer America's China Policy onto a course of aid to Chiang, the official policy of the United States still remained technically neutral. Nevertheless, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was appreciative of the U. S. Navy and stated that he had "a special regard for and real friendship with each U. S. Naval Commander

in the Far East and admired the U. S. Navy particularly because they were always willing to come to the help of friends in need."<sup>9</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

American naval leaders exerted important, but never decisive influence upon the formulation of America's China Policy for several reasons. Although Truman regularly sought the advice of Leahy and Forrestal, he invariably sided with the position of Marshall or Acheson in any case where there was disagreement. The Administration's China policy followed the lines advocated by Navy leaders, only when Marshall or Acheson supported the same position on their own, and usually for different reasons.

The key difference, which prevented naval leaders from influencing either Marshall or Acheson was the question of just how much aid to the Nationalists would be enough to save them. Forrestal, Leahy, Cooke and others maintained that any aid was better than no aid but Marshall and Acheson believed that only vast expenditures of American fortune and the commitment of large numbers of U. S. combat troops could keep the Government of Chiang Kai-shek in power. Although Acheson and Marshall clearly preferred a Nationalist China, neither felt that it was so vital to American security as to justify the risks of becoming directly involved in the Civil War.

In addition to their failure to steer top Administration officials on a course of complete support for Chiang, the strongly pro-Nationalist faction of naval officers only had mixed success in convincing other important Naval leaders that the Navy should commit more of its then very scarce resources to the defense of China. Although Leahy and Cooke generated wide sympathy for the Nationalist cause, naval strategic plans throughout the period reflected the fact that Europe and the Middle East were of primary importance in post-war naval strategy.

The actions of Forrestal, Leahy and Cooke had their greatest impact upon members of the Republican majority in Congress, who were already predisposed to challenge the policy of a Democratic administration. Although the lobbying efforts of naval leaders rallied many Congressmen to support the Nationalist, Congress, like the Navy, was able to affect the Truman Administration's China Policy only when Marshall or Acheson adopted a similar position. The final shift of Administration policy to one of complete support of Nationalist China occurred after the Civil War, and was prompted by Communist Chinese intervention in the Korean War in late 1950, not by U. S. naval influence.

American naval operations in Chinese waters significantly affected the early course of the Civil War, but had little bearing on the final outcome. Had it not been for the presence of American Marines and the transport of Nationalist troops by the U. S. Navy during 1945 and 1946, the Communists would have been able to capture large area of North China much earlier than they actually did. In addition, Chiang's re-occupation of Manchuria, incidently the great strategic blunder of the war, was only possible because of American naval assistance.

U. S. naval operations had much less impact during the later stages of the Civil War because, although American naval commanders interpreted their directives as favorably toward the Nationalist as they could, they steadfastly obeyed orders not to participate actively in the Civil War. Thus U. S. naval operations only indirectly supported the Nationalists. In addition, the Chinese Nationalist Navy, equipped, trained, and advised by the U. S. Navy, never became an effective fighting force during the Civil War. Despite the incentive of prize

money, Nationalist ships never greatly hampered the important Communist supply line between Manchuria and Shantung across the Gulf of Bohai.

U. S. Naval operations and the actions of naval leaders had their greatest, and hitherto unappreciated, effect upon the attitudes and perceptions of both Nationalist and Communist leaders. The presence of American Naval forces, commanded by officers outspokenly sympathetic to the Nationalist cause, was greatly responsible for the Communist's distrust of American motives and formed the basis of Communist propaganda charges that the United States was intervening directly in the internal affairs of China in favor of the Nationalists. Many important Chinese, already preconditioned to view naval power, previously in the form of gunboats, as a symbol of unwelcome foreign domination of China, were swayed by Communist charges. In addition, many Chinese resented American naval aid because they believed it only uselessly prolonged the Civil War.

On the other hand, the Nationalists, then dominated by military men, viewed the U. S. Navy, the most powerful American force in China, as a symbol of America's true resolve to support them in their fight against the Communists. Convinced that U. S. Naval power implied more American support than the Truman Administration meant it to, Nationalist leaders were encouraged to continue their disastrous attempt to win the war by military means alone. These same leaders, pre-conditioned by unquestioning Navy support during World War II, mistakenly believed that U. S. naval leaders exerted more influence in Washington than

they actually did. Thus throughout the Civil War, Chiang's generals consistently presented requests for military aid to the U. S. Navy first, before attempting to work through normal diplomatic channels.

As a final note, although the presence of U. S. naval forces adversely affected America's neutral and non-involvement policies during the Civil War, the case of the American Navy in China clearly demonstrates that even in a war that was primarily a clash between Armies and political ideologies, the important influence of seapower cannot be as easily dismissed as it was by policy-makers at the time or by historians since.

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